

BELL BOULEVARD REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

PREPARED FOR CITY OF CEDAR PARK
AUGUST 2015



PREPARED BY
DESIGNWORKSHOP
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Redevelopment along the Bell Boulevard corridor can transform the neighborhood into a place where Cedar Park residents and visitors can gather with friends.

BELL BOULEVARD REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

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Bell Boulevard will be a walkable community with vibrant retail opportunities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bell Boulevard, also known as US Highway 183, has long been the “backbone” of Cedar Park. As the community has grown and evolved through the decades, Bell Boulevard has remained the primary north-south corridor for the city.

Bell Boulevard was once a vital community hub, but the commercial area has experienced steady decline over the last several decades. While past studies focused on beautification improvements, these studies did not consider larger market conditions, and did not address the properties adjacent to the corridor. During the 2014 “Imagine Cedar Park” comprehensive planning process, community members expressed a desire to see Bell Boulevard revitalized as a thriving commercial corridor with its own unique identity and special charm.

In 2014, the City began a process to create the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan - a plan for the successful revitalization of the area. The process provided significant opportunities for public input and collaboration with experts in various fields. The plan expands upon previous studies, looking closely at factors in addition to beautification, such as traffic improvements, pedestrian mobility and economic development. It also incorporates current economic conditions to analyze the financial impact of corridor improvements. All of these influences, considered together, can lead to a positive return on investment for the Cedar Park community.

This document serves as the City of Cedar Park’s roadmap for transforming Bell Boulevard into a true destination.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on community input, business owner feedback, contributions from the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Project Work Group, and data and analysis conducted by the project team, the resulting vision relocates the portion of Bell Boulevard between Park Street and Buttercup Creek Boulevard further east to utilize the existing right of way of Old Highway 183. This approach opens up 40-acres for a connected development and joins up with the Buttercup Creek Natural Area to develop 12-acres with trail and park amenities. Some of the key features include:

REALIGNING BELL BOULEVARD

Moving Bell Boulevard eastward provides the opportunity to reduce the width of the road where Bell Boulevard is currently located. This ensures a connected neighborhood fabric that encourages walkability, activates the community's civic and commercial spaces and promotes an interactive, urban experience.

EXTENDING PARKWEST DRIVE

Parkwest Drive extends south along the edge of the Buttercup Creek Natural Area to provide an additional north/south connection west of Bell Boulevard. With traffic-calming and angled parking, this road will transition from the busier, more developed spaces to the new and improved Buttercup Creek Natural Area on the community's western edge.

ENSURING A MIX OF LAND USES

A community made up of a mix of uses and functions will serve the needs of a range of users, and ensure that the private and public realms are active at all times of the day. This will generate more revenue for businesses and create a vibrant place that people want to visit.

CREATING A GATEWAY INTERSECTION

Gateways serve a variety of purposes. In addition to improving safety and mobility on the revamped Bell Boulevard, an iconic gateway will welcome visitors and residents to the Destination Bell Boulevard District, orient visitors and foster a sense of civic place and identity.

PROMOTING WALKABLE BLOCKS

Narrower internal streets provide safe vehicular traffic conditions and foster pedestrian activity. Pedestrian areas make up approximately 52 percent of every new internal street – a departure from the approximately 18 percent currently on Bell Boulevard.

ENHANCING A NATURAL AMENITY

By juxtaposing vast areas of natural space with a compact mix of retail, residential, office and civic uses, the proposed development establishes a distinctive destination with far reaching appeal. In addition, the natural area buffers surrounding neighborhoods from the new Destination Bell Boulevard District.

The vision of this project is to create a gathering place and sense of identity for residents and businesses in Cedar Park, as well as an attraction that can draw from the larger metropolitan area. There are six primary goals for this project that fall within the categories of identity, economics, natural assets and community.

Economic



Goal 1: Create an economically vibrant corridor and energize the greater Cedar Park region.



Goal 2: Generate return on investment for the City of Cedar Park and private business.

Natural Assets



Goal 3: Work with natural and historical assets to define a more pleasant human experience.

Community



Goal 4: Maintain mobility and accommodate traffic levels while increasing access.



Goal 5: Gain support from affected stakeholders including land owners, developers and business owners.

Identity



Goal 6: Solidify what the identity of Cedar Park is through the master planning process.



The public confirmed project goals at the Values Workshop in January 2015.



Figure 1: Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan



The Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan seeks to promote a vibrant, more walkable community while maintaining vehicular mobility.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The commercial development along Bell Boulevard is not experiencing the level of vibrancy and activity that other areas are in Cedar Park. Because vehicular traffic volumes are increasing and access is becoming more challenging, the area is struggling to remain a vibrant community hub. The vision for this project is to create a gathering place for the community that helps foster a sense of identity for Cedar Park.

Previous studies for the corridor focused mainly on beautification improvements and thus did not consider adjacent properties or market conditions. The narrow focus of these studies limited the effectiveness of their implementation. Therefore, this master plan broadens the study area to include surrounding neighborhoods, adjoining crossroads and adjacent open spaces. With this expanded study area, the master plan addresses several factors in addition to beautification, such as traffic improvements, pedestrian mobility and economic development potential. All of these influences must be in balance in order to ensure they positively contribute to the return on investment and future viability for the Cedar Park community.

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT ORGANIZATION

The City of Cedar Park committed to involve the community in the creation of a new master plan for Bell Boulevard. A strategic approach to community engagement and collaboration with key decision makers was vital to producing a viable alternative to previous master plan studies.

HOW THE DOCUMENT WILL BE USED

The recommendations and outcomes of this plan will be implemented by leaders who remain committed to building on the unique character of the area, creating a family-friendly destination and transforming Bell Boulevard into a thriving commercial corridor.

OUTREACH PROCESS

The project team conducted a four step process:

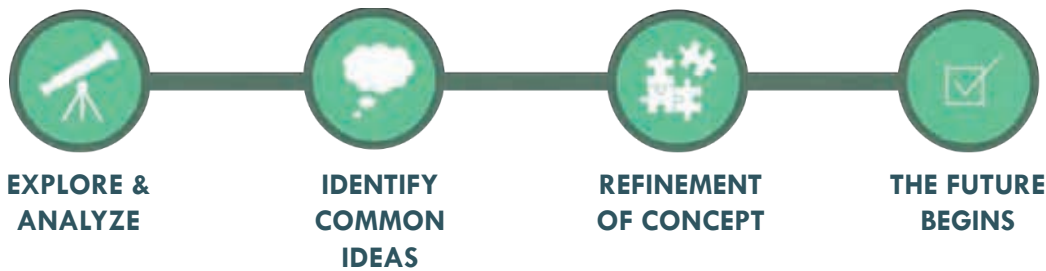


Figure 2: Outreach Process

EXPLORE & ANALYZE: WINTER OF 2014-15 (PUBLIC MEETING ON JANUARY 28, 2015)

The “explore and analyze” phase of the project featured data sharing and collaboration between the City, community and project team experts in engineering, urban planning, transportation and real estate. The study area was explored to gain an initial understanding of local and regional trends affecting Bell Boulevard.

IDENTIFY COMMON IDEAS: SPRING OF 2015 (PUBLIC MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2015)

Collaborators shared their ideas of what the future of Bell Boulevard might look like. Diverse perspectives on challenges and opportunities were identified to reveal common themes and a vision. Engagement activities determined approaches for Bell Boulevard that were most feasible and best met the goals of the community.

REFINEMENT OF CONCEPT: SPRING AND SUMMER OF 2015 (PUBLIC MEETING ON JULY 15, 2015)

Once common themes and a vision for Bell Boulevard were agreed upon, community workshops provided opportunities to refine plan elements. Stakeholder dialogue and additional benchmark research determined what is needed to make vision a reality.

THE FUTURE BEGINS

There are many moving parts to a project of this magnitude, and it does not happen overnight. Implementation recommendations provided in this master plan identify the first steps and lead implementers so that the community can move to achieve the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan vision.

GOALS

The vision of this project is to create a gathering place and sense of identity for residents and businesses in Cedar Park, as well as an attraction that can draw from the larger metropolitan area. There are six primary goals for this project that fall within the categories of economics, natural assets, community and identity.

ECONOMICS



GOAL 1: Create an economically vibrant corridor and energize the greater Cedar Park region.

GOAL 2: Generate return on investment for the City of Cedar Park and private business.

NATURAL ASSETS



GOAL 3: Work with natural and historical assets to define a more pleasant human experience.

COMMUNITY



GOAL 4: Maintain mobility and accommodate traffic levels while increasing access.

GOAL 5: Gain support from affected stakeholders including land owners, developers and business owners.

IDENTITY



GOAL 6: Solidify what the identity of Cedar Park is through the master planning process.

Figure 3: Community Goal Rankings summarizes how the public prioritized the goals during the Values Workshop. This data was gathered from live polling 144 participants and 244 online survey takers.

I BELIEVE THE MOST IMPORTANT GOALS TO FOCUS ON ARE (CHOOSE THREE)...

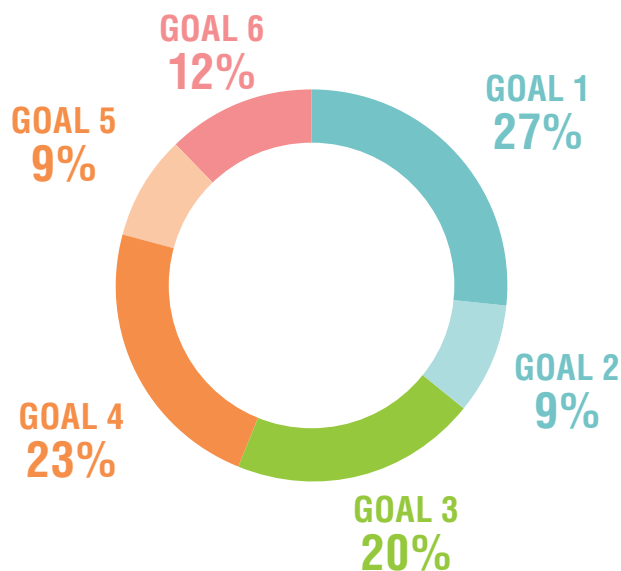
IDENTITY

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ECONOMICS

GOAL 1: Create an economically vibrant corridor and energize the greater Cedar Park region.

GOAL 2: Generate return on investment for the City of Cedar Park and private business.

NATURAL ASSETS

GOAL 3: Work with natural and historical assets to define a more pleasant human experience.

Figure 3: Community Goal Rankings

WHAT IS REDEVELOPMENT?

Redevelopment is a process by which new development happens on a site with pre-existing uses and buildings. Redevelopment is an important endeavor because it can enhance the economic, physical and environmental vitality of a city within specified project areas.

Redevelopment efforts can improve the community's image and economic and social climates. The repair and upgrade of the physical infrastructure improves the appearance, functionality and circulation of an area. These improvements benefit the community and encourage future investment.

WHY NOW?

Bell Boulevard is the spine of the community, and it is critical that Cedar Park improve such an important area. There are little remaining greenfields in the area with easy development potential. Without significant support for redevelopment, the area may not improve on its own very quickly. Additionally, during the most recent *Imagine Cedar Park* comprehensive plan process, community members expressed a desire to see Bell Boulevard revitalized as a thriving commercial corridor with its own unique identity and special charm.

REVIEW OF PAST PLANS

The Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan builds on a number of planning and design efforts completed by the City over the last few decades. This section outlines some of the previous planning efforts as they relate to the master plan process.

A STUDY OF US 183 TRAFFIC SERVICE IN CEDAR PARK

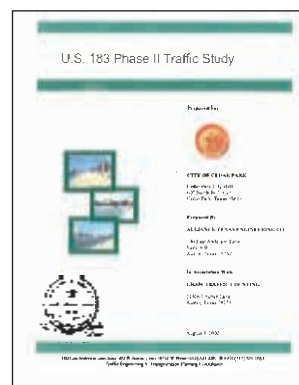
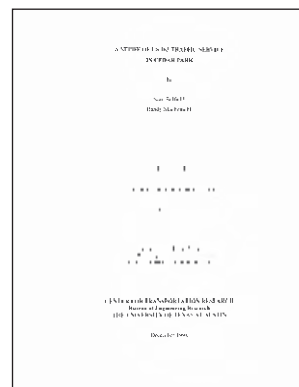
Developed in 1998, this study, conducted by the Center for Transportation Research for the Texas Department of Transportation, focused attention on "...operational characteristics along the arterial...for improving the transportation system through this area."¹ This approach focused on solving traffic problems with transportation and roadway based solutions. The lessons learned from this plan indicated a need for a broader approach and a comprehensive solution for the issues on and around Bell Boulevard.

U.S. 183 PHASE II TRAFFIC STUDY

A second plan developed for Bell Boulevard in 2000, aimed to create viable transportation solutions with minimal impact to adjacent businesses, residents, and community organizations. Like the first plan two years prior, the U.S. 183 Phase II Traffic Study objective was limited "...by the geometric constraints of the roadway,"² but the plan's recommendations did indicate a more diverse approach was necessary to attain a successful plan for Bell Boulevard.

¹ Sam Belfield and Randy Machemehl. "A Study of US 183 Traffic Service in Cedar Park." December 1998.

² Alliance-Texas Engineering Co. "U.S. 183 Phase II Traffic Study." August 9, 2000.



U.S. 183 CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT

The 2004 U.S. 183 Corridor Enhancement study provided beautification suggestions for medians, landscaped areas and key intersections. It explores sidewalk connectivity improvements along the right of way. Aesthetic recommendations include gateway signage that welcomes visitors to the downtown, landscaping featuring native Texas plants, the relocation of above ground wires and creation of monument shopping center signage to help reduce visual clutter, and the use of high-quality building materials to strengthen the existing vernacular of Cedar Park. Lessons learned from the 2004 study included that pedestrian and traffic safety could be improved through the consolidation of frequent driveways along the corridor and human comfort could be improved by additional shade trees and awnings along Bell Boulevard.

U.S. 183 CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT PLAN

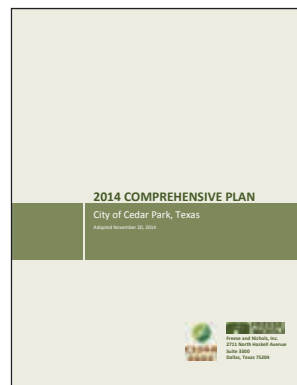
This plan, conducted in 2005, included goals to enhance, "...the economic vitality of the U.S. 183 Corridor through activities that focus on safety, mobility, access management and aesthetic improvements."³ This detailed plan, although limited in study area to a depth of one lot on each side of Bell Boulevard, identifies areas along Bell Boulevard where unified design elements could further the revitalization of the corridor. Several recurrent themes from community input from both the 2004 and 2005 studies emerged. These include the desire for improved pedestrian amenities, enhanced lighting at key intersections, signage that promotes the visibility of businesses, and unified landscaping, gateway and street signage elements.

US 183 REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The City conducted a study of the Bell Boulevard Corridor and produced a report entitled "US 183 Redevelopment Strategies" in January of 2014. This report envisioned the character of the corridor "to be a family-friendly destination that creates a vibrant mix of existing establishments, eclectic, local, and new businesses."⁴ The report also recommended using a node concept along Bell Boulevard in order to create high quality development. The node approach looks beyond the adjacent parcels along Bell Boulevard in order to create a high quality, walkable, mixed-use destination.

2014 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan reiterated the need for a comprehensive redevelopment strategy along Bell Boulevard. The plan recommended "concentrated nodes of development" that achieve a "walkable and connected environment." The 2014 Comprehensive Plan also proposed "nonresidential growth to support innovative, technology, and research related fields that will generate employment in Cedar Park." Finally, the Plan stressed the need for city services, infrastructure and roadways to continue to meet demand as population increases along Bell Boulevard.⁵



³ City of Cedar Park. "U.S. 183 Corridor Enhancement Plan." 2005.

⁴ City of Cedar Park. "U.S. 183 Redevelopment Strategies." 2014.

⁵ City of Cedar Park. "2014 Comprehensive Plan" 2014.



Today, the study area is primarily defined by auto-centric infrastructure and commercial development patterns.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In order to plan for a community's future, it is first necessary to understand a community's past and present. The first task of the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan consisted of collecting, consolidating, and assessing data from a number of sources, conducting field research to fill in gaps in knowledge and beginning a listening process to understand the needs and desires of area residents, stakeholders and landowners.

PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

LOCAL CONTEXT

The study area is located in the heart of Cedar Park. It is situated just two miles from the northern boundary of Austin, Texas, and approximately five miles from the western edge of Round Rock. Cedar Park has been nationally identified as one of the fastest growing suburbs in the nation. The City has been awarded numerous accolades during the last several years as one of the nation’s most livable communities, and a top place to raise a family.



Figure 4: Context Map

LAND USE

Commercial uses make up 87 percent of the Bell Boulevard study area. The Buttercup Creek Natural Area and the Cedar Park Cemetery make up 6 percent. The remaining parcels are office (4 percent) and town homes (3 percent). Of the entire study area, 17 percent of the land is vacant and many of the commercial properties are in poor condition. The open space is primarily undeveloped, which presents a significant opportunity to create a park amenity and connect to Bell Boulevard with walkable high quality development.

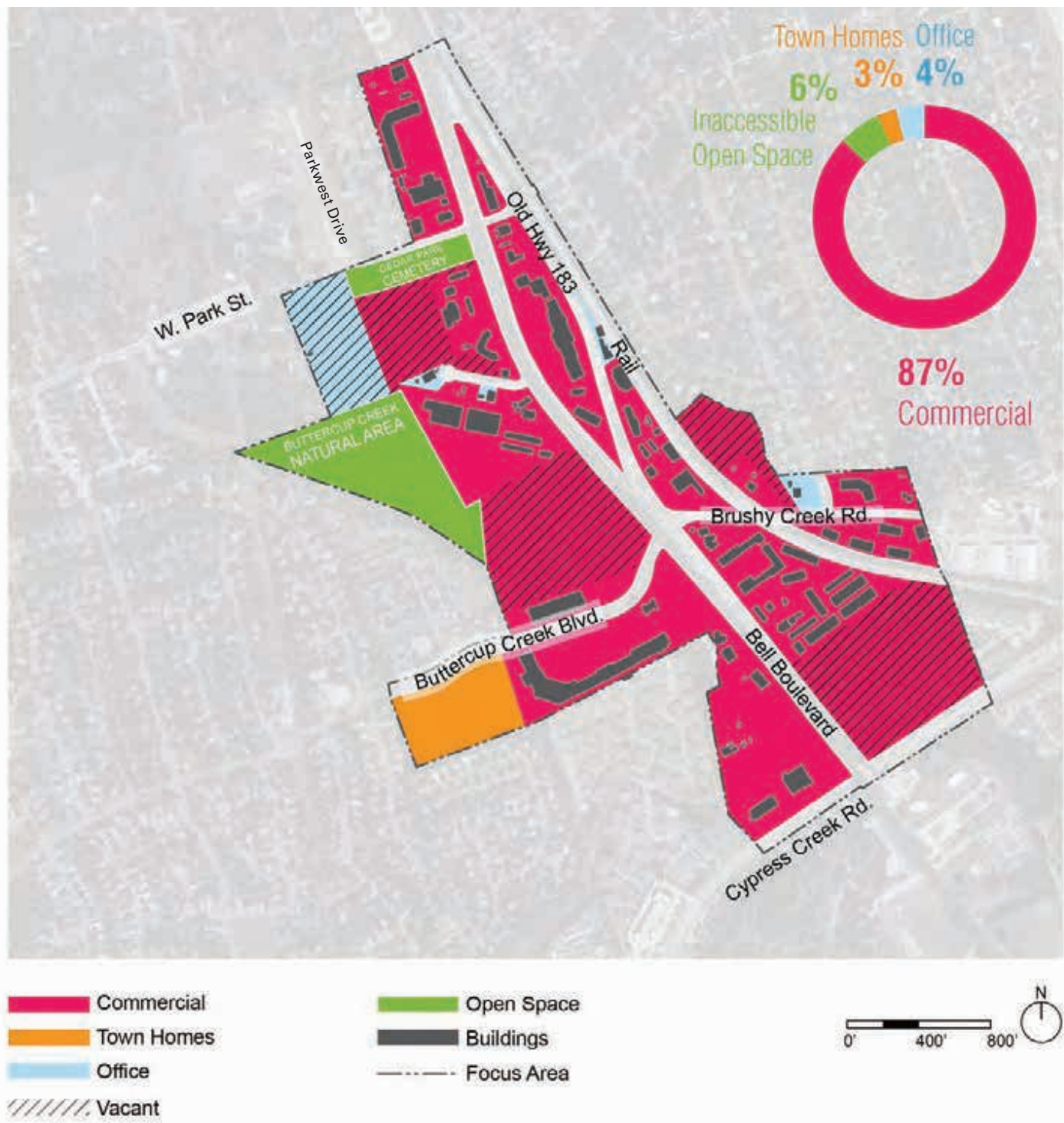


Figure 5: Land Use Map

TRANSPORTATION

Bell Boulevard is the main transportation route running north and south through Cedar Park. It is intersected at three points within the study area at West Park Street, Brushy Creek Road and Cypress Creek Road. Non-vehicular transportation access includes a major rail line running parallel to Bell Boulevard, separated by commercial land and buildings, along two-thirds of Bell Boulevard from north to south before splitting off to the east.



Figure 6: Transportation Map

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water main lines extend the length of Bell Boulevard on both sides of the road and cross Bell at Brushy Creek Road and Cypress Creek Road. Sewer main lines extend the length of Bell Boulevard along the west side of the road and cross just north of Cypress Creek. The roadway also has overhead utilities (electric, cable and telecommunication) throughout the project limits. Buttercup Creek serves as an important drainage way flowing from northwest to southeast joining contributing streams toward the southern boundary of the study area. There is stormwater piping along the entire length of the study boundary.



Figure 7: Utility Map

NATURAL SYSTEMS

The Buttercup Creek 100-year floodplain establishes itself as the dominate natural feature within the Bell Boulevard study area. Buttercup Creek extends from outside the northwest boundary through the site to the southeast edge on the eastern side of Bell Boulevard. The steepest changes in topography occur along the Buttercup Creek boundary.



Figure 8: Natural Systems Map

CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

To gain an understanding of dominant cultural institutions in Cedar Park, a proximity study was used to highlight the various civic, education and religious uses throughout the City. Multiple community facilities, schools and fire stations are evenly spread throughout Cedar Park. The Bell Boulevard study area is centrally located among the various cultural facilities.



Figure 9: Cultural Context Map

PRIMARY FAÇADE

Most buildings have single-sided architecture. In other words, investment and attention to the design aesthetic of buildings are only featured on one primary façade. These façades are typically more aesthetically pleasing and inviting than the other faces of the building. The diagram depicts that most of primary façades are primarily setback from the street and face onto large parking lots that are accessed off of Bell Boulevard or the nearest major crossroad.



Figure 10: Primary Façade Map

BUILDING TYPE

The dominant building type within the study area is retail commercial with other general commercial following in second. Small government and institutional buildings are also present. The smallest percentage of building usage is residential and historic.

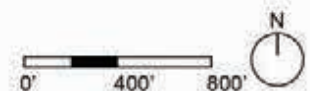
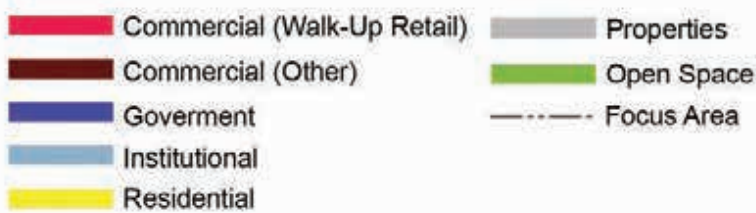


Figure 11: Building Type Map

BUILDING AGE

There are numerous aging structures in the existing building stock. The largest percentage (32 percent) of buildings were constructed between 1990 and 1999. A small portion (6 percent) of buildings were constructed between 2000 and 2009. Few buildings (4 percent) were constructed between 2010 to present day.



Figure 12: Building Age Map

MARKET ASSESSMENT

FUTURE DEMAND BY LAND USE

RCLCO is a leading independent real estate advisory firm that provides strategic and tactical advice on property investment, planning, and development. For this master plan, RCLCO provided a Market Demand Analysis to help the project team identify what type of residential, office and retail product the study area could potentially absorb in the years to come.

RESIDENTIAL

Increasingly, people are looking for an atmosphere that affords them a live, work, play lifestyle. These residents, whether they be young professionals, singles or downsizing empty nesters, currently cannot find this type of an apartment community in Cedar Park. All of the household growth in the past decade and a half has been in the form of either garden style apartments or single family housing. Apartment communities in north Austin near Lakeline Mall and along Whitestone Boulevard, while located close to large retail concentrations and major roadways to access regional employment, are auto-oriented islands of development not fully integrated into the surrounding area, providing a less cohesive version of the live, work, play lifestyle. Including residential housing in the redevelopment plan will help animate the development and support the commercial uses, furthering the plan's vision for a vibrant, successful area. The walkable nature of the development, onsite retail, and nearby park space will serve as highly desirable amenities for residential housing.

Research conducted by RCLCO, found that mixed-use apartments in such a setting are built at a higher quality and tend to be in higher demand than nearby garden style apartments. Given historical growth trends, new household projections, and local demographics, there is likely market support for up to five multi-story mixed-use developments between 275 and 325 units each.

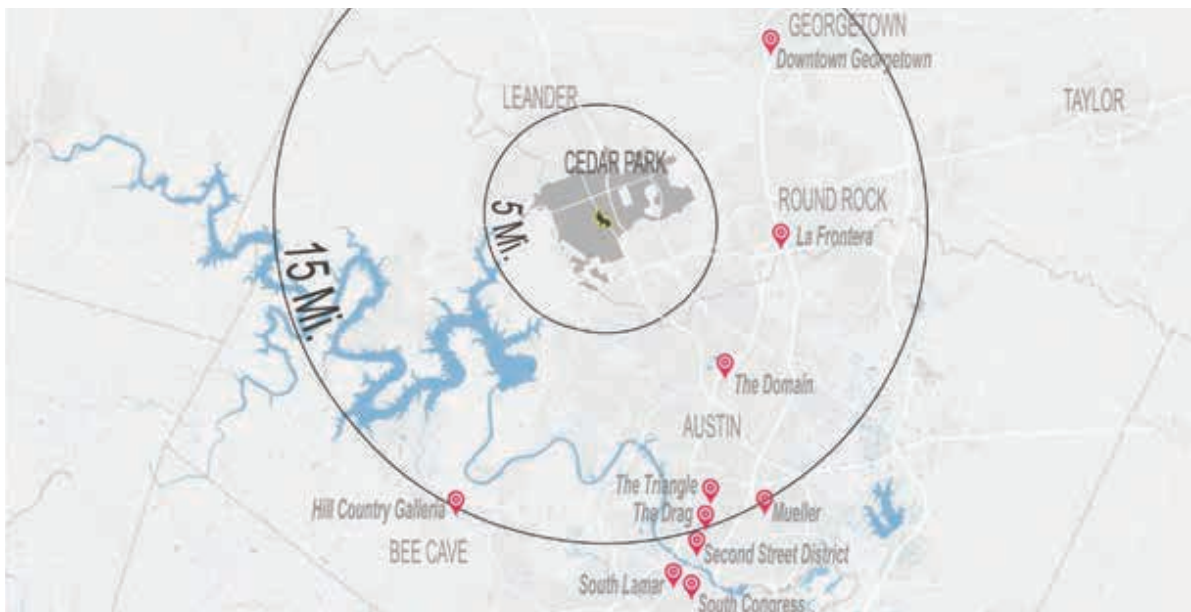


Figure 13: Regional Map of Vibrant Mixed-use Centers

RETAIL

Retail properties on Bell Boulevard are older, on average circa 1982, and typically one-story, stand alone centers. Newer, larger, and more cohesively designed retail space is clustered around Lakeline Mall, 1890 Ranch Shopping Center, and Cedar Park Town Center. While Bell Boulevard is less suited for regional-serving retail than Lakeline Mall or The Domain due to its less visible location away from a major freeway, Bell Boulevard has languished over the years, missing out on smaller neighborhood stores and services that have chosen to locate elsewhere in newer buildings. In the absence of meaningful real estate investment, whether it be renovations or new construction, the performance of properties can begin to sink for both business owners and the municipality. *Figure 14: Value of Mixed-use vs. Single Use Development* demonstrates this concept. According to an analysis on the tax revenue of properties on Bell Boulevard conducted by the Cedar Park Director of Finance showing multiple year-over-year declines, Bell Boulevard is currently past the peak on the value continuum. However, redevelopment efforts to create a more vibrant setting to include a diverse mix of land-uses would reorient Bell Boulevard with the trajectory of the blue line in *Figure 14: Value of Mixed-use vs. Single Use Development*. Given strong nearby spending power and sizeable traffic counts, the site could serve as a destination-worthy 'place' by changing the condition and appearance of the built environment.

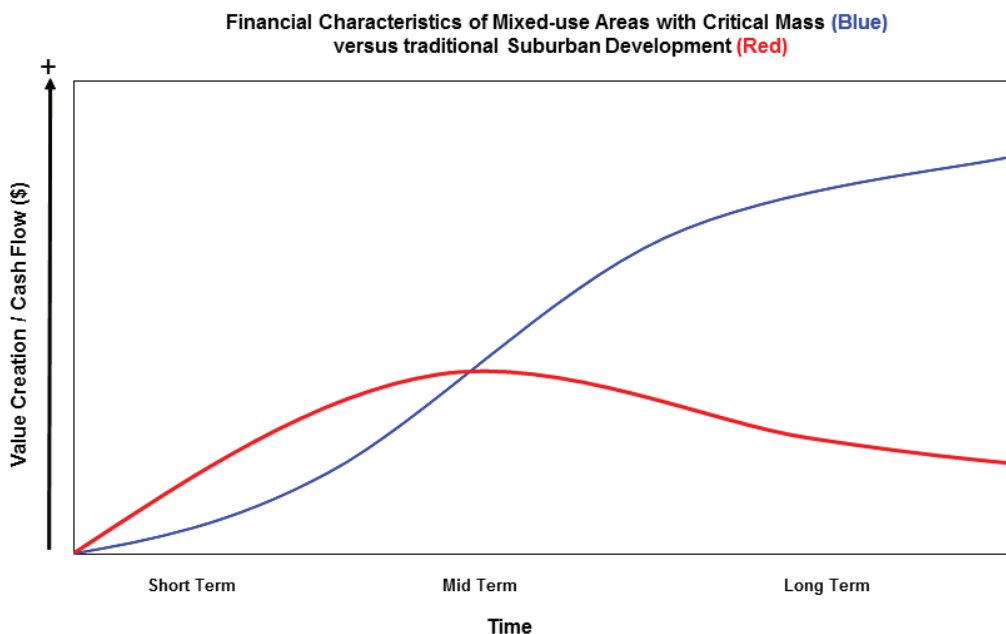


Figure 14: Value of Mixed-use vs. Single Use Development

Demand for retail space in Cedar Park will continue to be driven by strong nearby household growth. Taking into account household expenditures classified by category, the project team was able to estimate the potential retail the study area could capture. Although not all of this additional space is suitable as ground-floor mixed-use retail space, the study area will be able to capture some of the new demand for neighborhood services, restaurants, boutique soft goods and specialty grocery. Additionally, increasing the nearby daytime population by bringing in office employment will provide further support for retail space. Once fully developed with a diverse mix of onsite residents and workers, Bell Boulevard could likely absorb between 400,000 - 600,000 square feet of retail space. All of this space will be developed in multiple phases and locations in an incremental fashion.

OFFICE

Traditionally, Cedar Park has attracted small, surface parked office space that appeals to businesses oriented around providing neighborhood services such as insurance sales agents, small scale medical offices, etc. The study area is a short distance from the 183A-Toll Road, with direct access from Cypress Creek Road but in its current state and appearance it is unlikely to appeal to large suburban office tenants that may prefer to locate directly off of the toll road. However, the live, work, play atmosphere that Destination Bell Boulevard is likely to foster will offer larger office users an opportunistic development. In fact, survey respondents in a study conducted by NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, said they would prefer to locate within a mixed-use development than a single-use office by a margin of 4-to-1. By creating an attractive, walkable setting with nearby retail and park-space, Bell Boulevard could attract some professional services or technology tenants that would have otherwise looked elsewhere. Office buildings should be well integrated within the redevelopment, built at the same scale and appearance as the rest of the redevelopment, and located near major transportation corridors. Connectivity and accessibility improvements to 183A-Toll Road will improve the desirability of the site for office tenants. Once fully redeveloped, Bell Boulevard could potentially absorb between 300,000 - 500,000 square feet of office space. Any demand for stand-alone office space will follow the completion of the mixed-use shopping blocks of the redevelopment.

CIVIC

The study area may also be a great location for future community focused civic uses. These institutions can help to support and build local economies by encouraging small-scale businesses and local entrepreneurship through educational programming, festivals and other locally-sponsored activities that create a regional draw. Civic uses can be powerful catalysts to redevelopment through programming, planning and facility management. Cedar Park may also see higher-quality developments in the future because of the premium placed on an inviting, community-focused destination.



A rigorous Stakeholder Engagement Strategy identified a community vision, and determined the preferred planning and design solutions to realize it.

VISION

The vision for Bell Boulevard was developed through extensive engagements with the stakeholders in order to provide the City of Cedar Park with a corridor master plan that creates an economically vibrant gathering place and sense of identity. The master plan will guide this vision to fruition through careful development and implementation. The vision imagines a destination for Cedar Park that relies on crucial market analysis and metrics review that will ensure the highest probability for success.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

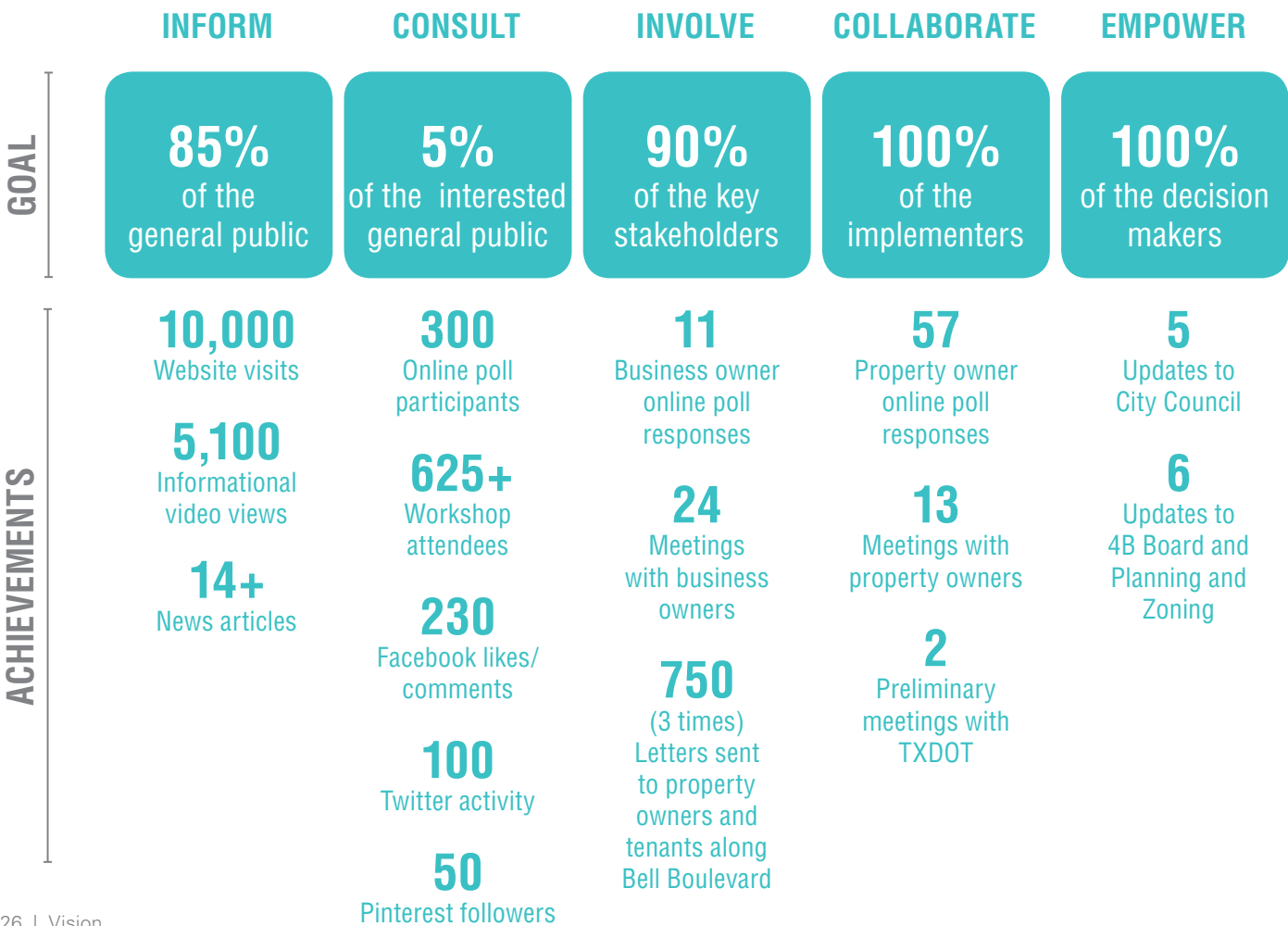
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Cedar Park conducted an extensive public outreach effort that included workshops, focus groups, an advisory committee, stakeholder interviews, online polls, social media, and a robust, regularly updated website. The outreach led to a community vision that is accountable to measurable criteria, and broadly supported by stakeholders.

Stakeholder outreach involved contacting people within the study area and those who may have interest in the future of Bell Boulevard. Several key questions were asked in order to gain an understanding of market conditions, issues and desired improvements.

A Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (SES) determined how to organize stakeholders into those that need to be informed, consulted, involved, collaborated with and empowered. This developed into a SES that describes how each stakeholder will be involved in the project.

Figure 15: Stakeholder Engagement Overview



BELL BOULEVARD REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN PROJECT WORKING GROUP

In order to guide the master plan process, City Council approved a working group made up of City Council members, Planning and Zoning commissioners, Community Development Corporation board members, Chamber of Commerce board members and property owners.

These group members, along with City of Cedar Park staff, worked together to ensure citizen input was incorporated in the vision and final plan.

Members included:

- Corbin Van Arsdale, Cedar Park City Council Member,
- Lyle Grimes, Cedar Park City Council Member,
- Kelly Brent, Planning and Zoning Commission Member,
- Kaden Norton, 4B Community Development Corporation Board Member,
- Kevin Harris, Planning and Zoning Commission Member,
- Tony Moline, Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, and
- Scott Carr, Real Estate Developer and Property Owner.

The working group met five times during the planning process. Group members provided invaluable feedback ensuring that the process was thorough and addressed the needs of the community.



KEY STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The stakeholder outreach process posed numerous questions on topics ranging from physical issues, observed decline of Bell Boulevard and desired changes. Many responses can be observed by visiting the site such as dated appearance, lack of pedestrian access, vehicular ingress and egress issues and shifted development to the north and east. Others related to stakeholder opinions on what the future of Bell Boulevard should include such as promoting redevelopment, vibrancy, a revived destination, attention to incorporating local small business and increased vehicular mobility and access. The proposed alternatives for Bell Boulevard addressed the key issues identified by stakeholders.

PROPERTY AND BUSINESS OWNER OUTREACH

The City of Cedar Park interviewed numerous property and business owners. Throughout the course of the project, over 750 property owners and tenants in and outside of the focus area received three letters in the mail. One had a link to an online survey. In addition, the City created an interactive website as a clearinghouse for information on the study as well as a special webpage just for businesses and property owners. These webpages also featured links to the survey to gather as much input from stakeholders as possible. Additionally, City staff spoke to numerous community groups about this project including the Chamber of Commerce, Cedar Park homeowner's associations and others.

JANUARY 2015 VALUES WORKSHOP

At the Values Workshop, the project team presented existing conditions, stakeholder findings and benchmark mixed-use developments across Texas and the U.S.

The Values Workshop drew feedback from participants through interactive polling. Approximately 144 workshop attendees voiced their top priorities for changes to Bell Boulevard, such as promoting existing shops and adding new businesses, improving access to businesses from the roadway and making better use of nearby green space. Some participants shared that they wanted a road that is a positive introduction to Cedar Park for the approximately 40,000 vehicles that drive on Bell Boulevard daily. Following the workshop, the City of Cedar Park posted the keypad polling questions and a video of the proceedings online for citizens unable to attend. *Figure 16: Values Workshop Polling Results* summarizes a few of the questions posed at the Values Workshop. This data was gathered from live polling 144 participants and 244 online survey takers.

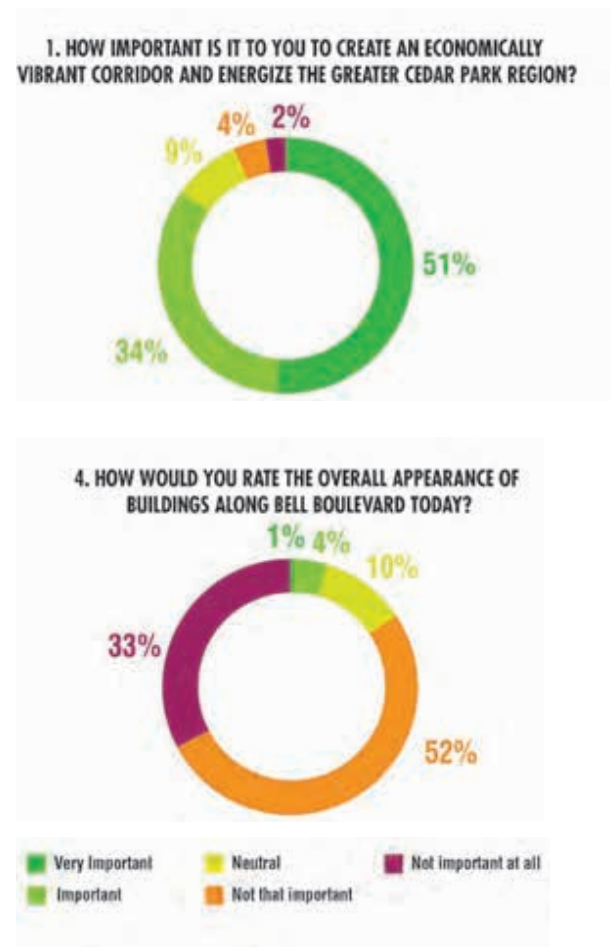


Figure 16: Values Workshop Polling Results

APRIL 2015 VISION WORKSHOP

Approximately 275 people came out to review the alternative designs for Destination Bell Boulevard during the Vision Workshop. The workshop consisted of a presentation, and a question and answer open house. Multiple stations displayed three redevelopment concepts for attendees to review and ask questions. Individual surveys were collected and analyzed to help determine how to move forward with the preferred alternative. Again, the City of Cedar Park shared video and a summary of the meeting online following the workshop.

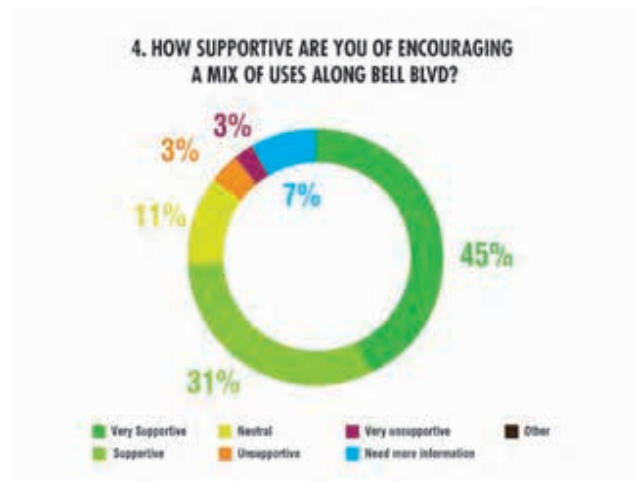


Figure 17: Values Workshop Polling Results



During the Vision Workshop, stakeholders evaluated the three development alternatives.

JULY 2015 IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP

After several months of community input, discussions with property owners, City staff and professional consultants, the project team revealed the preferred plan to over 300 engaged citizens. The Implementation Workshop consisted of a series of stations that aimed to inform and engage participants before and after the presentation. After registering, workshop attendees made their way through a tunnel of perspectives, followed by an image preference survey and an interactive touch screen station. This series of interactive stations was followed by a short presentation that focused on next steps and provided plenty of time for question and answer. Participants also shared their thoughts in an exercise where they filled in adjectives and nouns they would use to describe the future Destination Bell Boulevard, and footage from the event was posted online following the workshop.



Implementation Workshop participants filled in the blanks to describe the future character of Cedar Park.



The preferred alternative was revealed and further detailed during the Implementation Workshop.

IDENTITY EXERCISE

Through a series of public polling exercises, as seen in the images above, the design team was able to gauge the overall feel Cedar Park residents wanted for Bell Boulevard. Mock Pinterest™ boards were created for a series of three “suites” representing different typologies including Main Street, Trail Head, and Think Tank. Cedar Park residents were given green dots to place on the images they preferred the most. The images and their corresponding green dot count was analyzed to produce a cohesive group of imagery that expresses the desires of the public. An online version of this study was created to allow residents to continue to submit ideas and imagery for Bell Boulevard.



Residents of Cedar Park participated in several engaging activities during the public meetings.



A scan of the final results from the dot exercise reveals the most popular imagery.

POPULAR IMAGERY



Having safe, engaging spaces for children to play and interact is a priority.



Sophisticated and festive lighting should be used to generate comfortable night time atmospheres.



Art will be an important component of Bell Boulevard and will help create a unique sense of place.



Attention to the streetscape in order to design for comfortable, adequate and shaded pedestrian space is important.



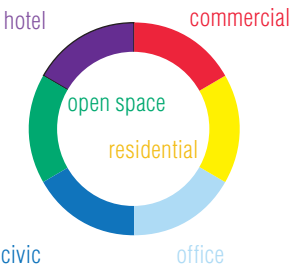
Park amenities like trails and water access will help draw users into the beautiful natural scenery.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

EXPLORING COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES

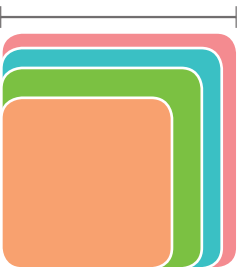
While no two communities are alike, the lessons learned in one place can be instructive in another. In particular, the form and configuration of a community’s built environment can promote (or undermine) its efforts to enhance cultural and economic vitality. These downtown/main street developments from throughout Texas represent six differing approaches to promoting active public and private realms, the lessons from which will help drive design interventions in Cedar Park. In these case studies, analysis focused on four key indicators, or metrics, for urban design.

LAND USE



The amount of square footage and percentage of the development that is commercial, office, hotel, civic, open space and residential uses. A diverse and heterogeneous mix of uses promotes continuous activity and attracts a range of different user groups.

BLOCK LENGTH



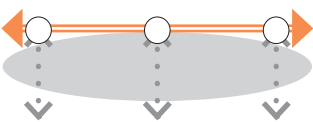
Block length determines a development’s urban grid. A long block can discourage pedestrians from walking to their intended destination. Block length can vary tremendously between communities, and can also be a major determinant of pedestrian usage, commercial activity, and adaptability for future development.

INTERSECTION DENSITY



Intersection density indicates the amount of roadway intersections per one half square mile within an area. Typically, high densities of intersections can correspond to decreased traffic speeds and increased pedestrian activity, but can also indicate increased vehicular accessibility.

ARTERIAL-SHOPPING INTERFACE



The spatial relationship between a shopping street and its associated primary arterial road has a direct effect on the success of a commercial street. Commercial areas that are visibly and physically accessible from arterial roads are more likely to thrive than those that are not. However, large arterials that run directly through a shopping district can bisect the area making it less likely for people to cross from one side of the street to the other.

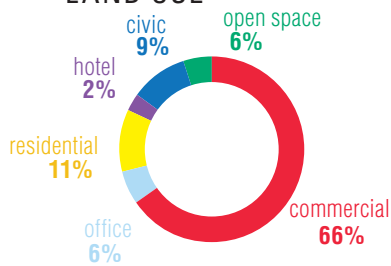
Figure 18: Key Metrics Definitions

MARKET STREET - THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS

This town center is aimed at servicing both the high income neighborhoods in The Woodlands and attracting visitors. In addition to offering a range of residential options, including lofts, town homes, and condos, the development is knitted together by a 1.5-mile waterway.



LAND USE



BLOCK SIZE

300'x400'

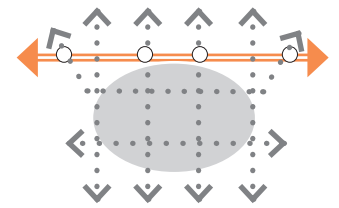


INTERSECTION DENSITY

136.6
per 1/2 square mile



ARTERIAL-SHOPPING STREET INTERFACE



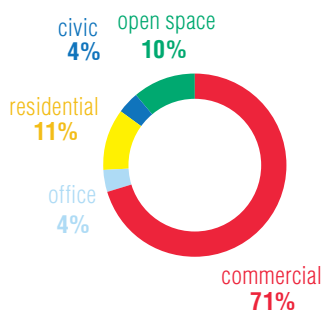
Source: The Woodlands Development Company

HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA - BEE CAVE, TEXAS

Located less than 30 miles from Cedar Park, Hill Country Galleria is its closest comparable development benchmark. The single-owner development contains a mix of shopping, residences, recreation, and civic uses.

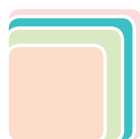


LAND USE



BLOCK SIZE

350'x300'

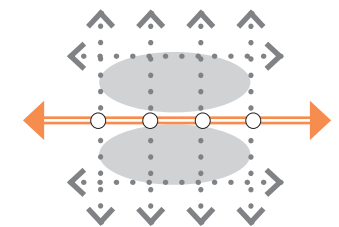


INTERSECTION DENSITY

54.4
per 1/2 square mile



ARTERIAL-SHOPPING STREET INTERFACE



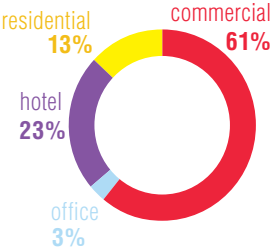
Source: Google Earth

TOWN SQUARE - SOUTHLAKE, TEXAS

This upscale downtown development blends nearly 2.7 million square feet of boutique retail, residential, and office uses. Additionally, Southlake Town Square is notable for its iconic public plazas.



LAND USE



BLOCK SIZE

250'x250'

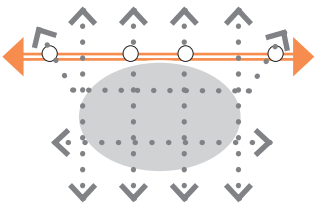


INTERSECTION DENSITY

101.8
per 1/2 square mile



ARTERIAL-SHOPPING STREET INTERFACE



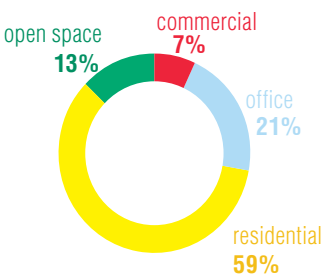
Source: David M. Schwarz Architects

ADDISON CIRCLE - ADDISON, TEXAS

Adjacent to Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, this affluent suburban town center occupies 124 acres, 28 of which are public. The development features 6 million square feet of mixed commercial use and 4.7 million square feet of mixed residential use.



LAND USE



BLOCK SIZE

350'x250'

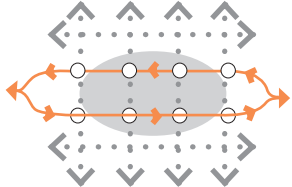


INTERSECTION DENSITY

69.0
per 1/2 square mile



ARTERIAL-SHOPPING STREET INTERFACE



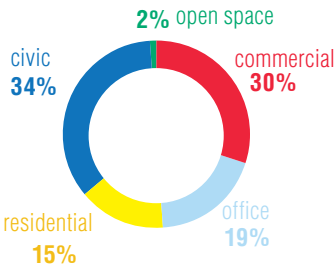
Source: Google Earth

DOWNTOWN - GEORGETOWN, TEXAS

Adhering to strict guidelines for historic preservation, multiple developers worked to enhance this town center 25 miles north of Austin. An advisory board continuously works with the City Council to promote ongoing downtown economic development.



LAND USE



BLOCK SIZE

250'x250'

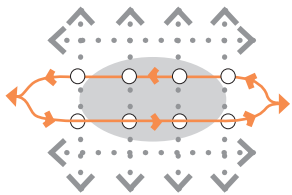


INTERSECTION DENSITY

118.4
per 1/2 square mile



ARTERIAL-SHOPPING STREET INTERFACE



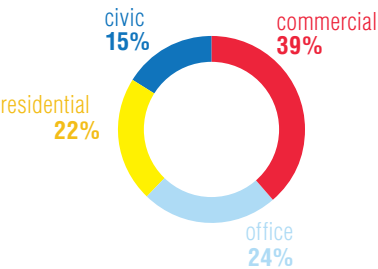
Source: Williamson County Tax Assessor Data

DOWNTOWN - GRAPEVINE, TEXAS

A multi-lateral development effort re-established the historic downtown corridor of this Dallas suburb. Like Cedar Park, it is adjacent to significant natural ecological amenities.



LAND USE



BLOCK SIZE

400'x600'

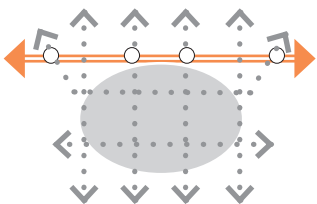


INTERSECTION DENSITY

51.2
per 1/2 square mile



ARTERIAL-SHOPPING STREET INTERFACE



Source: Tarrant County Tax Assessor Data, Google Earth

PROPOSED VISION

CREATE A PARK AND EXTEND PARKWEST DRIVE

The existing 12 acre Buttercup Creek Natural Area is undeveloped and inaccessible to residents of Cedar Park. *Figure 19: Park and Parkwest Drive Location Diagram* illustrates how an extension of Parkwest Drive between Park Street and Buttercup Creek Boulevard could provide an alternative north/south route for local traffic. The street could also have new businesses, on-street parking and shaded, walkable sidewalks.

According to the 2014 Parks Master Plan, the area around Buttercup Creek is among the first settled in the city. Buttercup Creek Natural Area is a large area intended to provide access to nature and preserve key natural assets in the city. These areas typically have little development beyond parking and trails.

The park—12 acres of undeveloped natural area—would be an amenity for the greater Cedar Park community, but especially for the neighborhoods near the study area, which currently lack a large greenspace. It could provide 2.5 miles of nature trails on site (and link to an additional 30+ miles of regional nature trails), family gathering spaces such as picnic areas, restrooms and a native garden for visitors to learn about the natural flora and fauna native to Cedar Park. This project would also restore the natural area by removing invasive species to ensure maximum health of Buttercup Creek. An active area of the park could be included adjacent to the shopping street in order to provide additional gathering and seating space for visitors, as well as family oriented recreation such as a playground and interactive water feature. Finally, proximity to a natural area would raise commercial rents in the neighboring development.

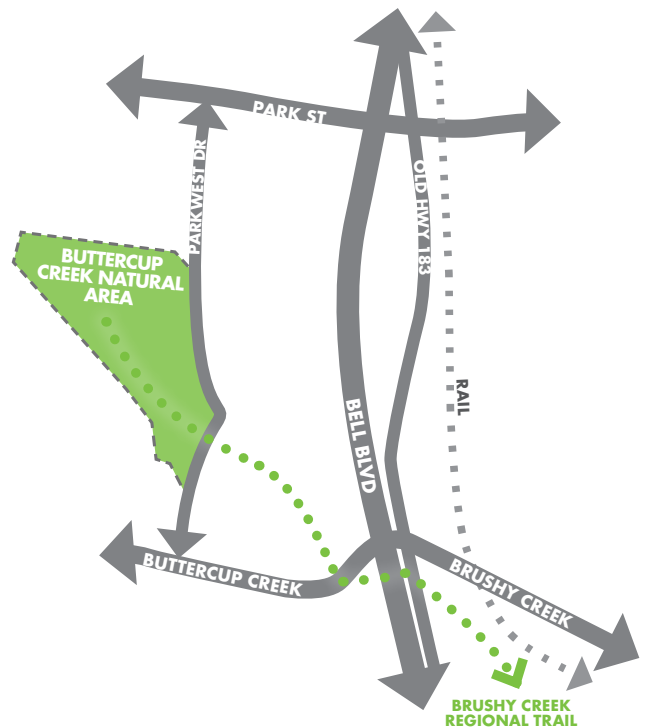


Figure 19: Park and Parkwest Drive Location Diagram



Juxtaposing a vibrant commercial realm with Buttercup Creek Natural Area would help Cedar Park leverage its existing natural assets.

CREATE A GATEWAY INTERSECTION

Traffic clashes at the six-way intersection of Old Highway 183, Bell Boulevard, Buttercup Creek Boulevard and Brushy Creek Road making it confusing, unsafe and unwelcoming. This area experiences one of the highest levels of minor car collisions and accidents in the city. *Figure 20: Bell Boulevard and Brushy Creek Road Intersection Diagram* illustrates the location of this area.

Merging Bell Boulevard and Old Highway 183 into one road at this intersection would create a more legible four-way intersection. In addition to improving vehicular safety and mobility, the improved intersection could also have wide sidewalks and crosswalks to improve pedestrian accessibility. Finally, a welcoming gateway feature will signify to visitors that they are entering a special place.

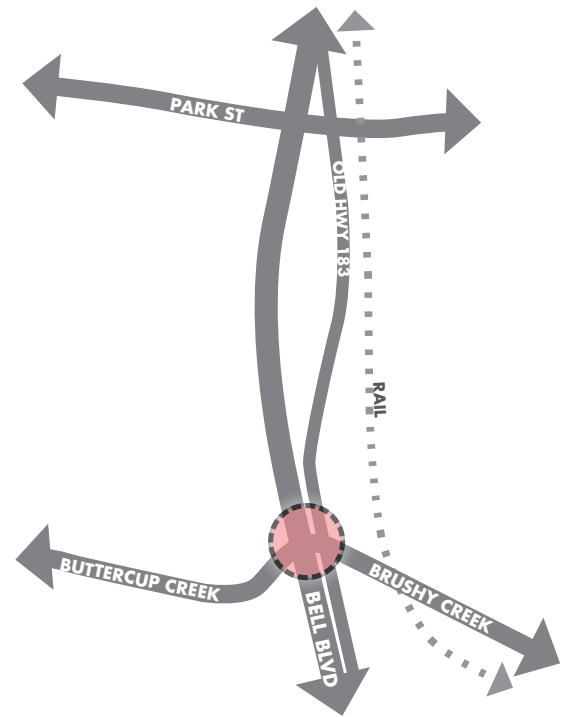


Figure 20: Bell Boulevard and Brushy Creek Road Intersection Diagram



CREATE WALKABLE BLOCKS

Bell Boulevard's existing sidewalks are near the street, and crosswalks are roughly 2,000 feet apart. Walkable blocks (300 to 500 feet apart) and one signalized intersection along Bell Boulevard will be used so that pedestrian crossings are closer together with wide sidewalks and trees for shade. *Figure 21: Walkable Blocks and Signalized Intersection Diagram* illustrates how a network of internal streets will allow people to move easily throughout the development.

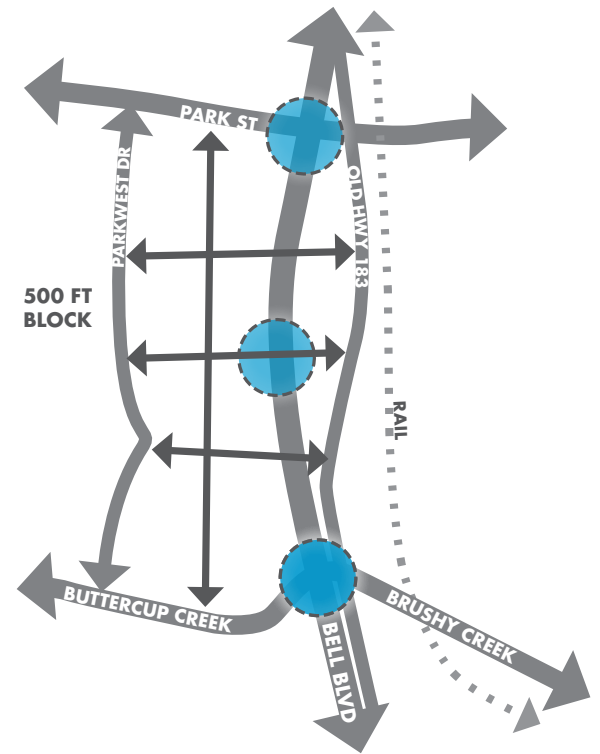


Figure 21: Walkable Blocks and Signalized Intersection Diagram



CREATE A MIX OF USES

Bell Boulevard’s real estate offerings are about 87 percent commercial and about 17 percent of the area is undeveloped or vacant. This land use mix is not an optimal mix for destination districts. *Figure 22: Existing and Future Mix of Land Uses* illustrates how existing land uses could be improved in the future. A mix of office and residential development above ground floor retail would target empty-nesters and young professionals who desire to live and work in a walkable lifestyle district.

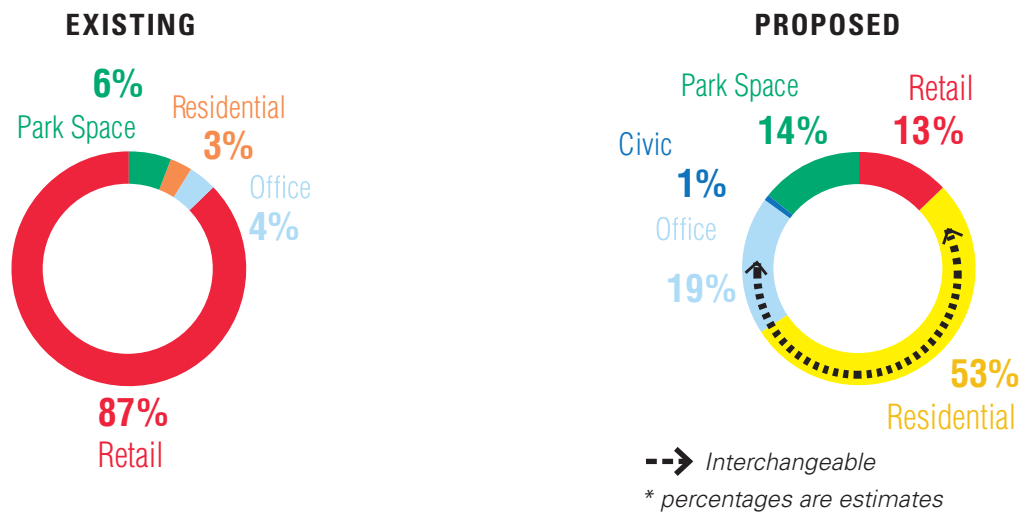
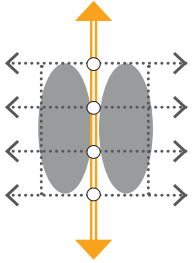


Figure 22: Existing and Future Mix of Land Uses



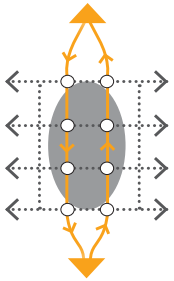
DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The project team recommended three ways to redevelop Bell Boulevard to become a destination district, comparing each to a form of fencing.



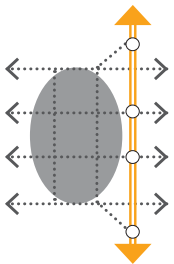
BOARD ON BOARD ALTERNATIVE

Board on Board fencing is an impenetrable buffer where views and access are blocked. The Board on Board alternative would reconstruct the five-lane highway in place with a center lane, widen sidewalks and preserve 30 acres for a destination district west of the highway.



SPLIT RAIL ALTERNATIVE

Split Rail is a transparent and meandering barrier between two spaces. The Split Rail alternative would split Bell Boulevard between Brushy Creek Road/Buttercup Creek Boulevard and Park Street into two one-way couplets with two lanes in each direction and turn lanes. Southbound traffic would use the current road space, and northbound traffic would use a rebuilt Old Highway 183. The southbound road would include parking lanes for the district.



PICKET ALTERNATIVE

Picket fencing is a transparent and visually appealing buffer offering views into an adjacent greenspace. The Picket alternative would move all five lanes of Bell Boulevard east to replace Old Highway 183 next to the railroad line. This proposal would bring the 14 acres on the east side of Bell into the connected pedestrian areas to create 40 acres of walkable, connected development.



Figure 23: Board on Board Alternative Plan



Figure 24: Split Rail Alternative Plan



Figure 25: Picket Alternative Plan

EXISTING CONDITIONS

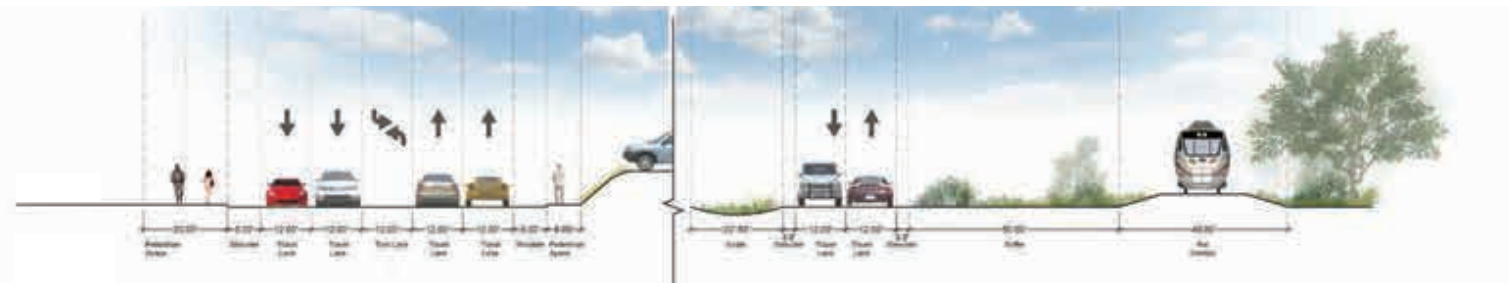


Figure 26: Existing Bell Boulevard Section

BOARD ON BOARD ALTERNATIVE



Figure 27: Board on Board Bell Boulevard Section

SPLIT RAIL ALTERNATIVE

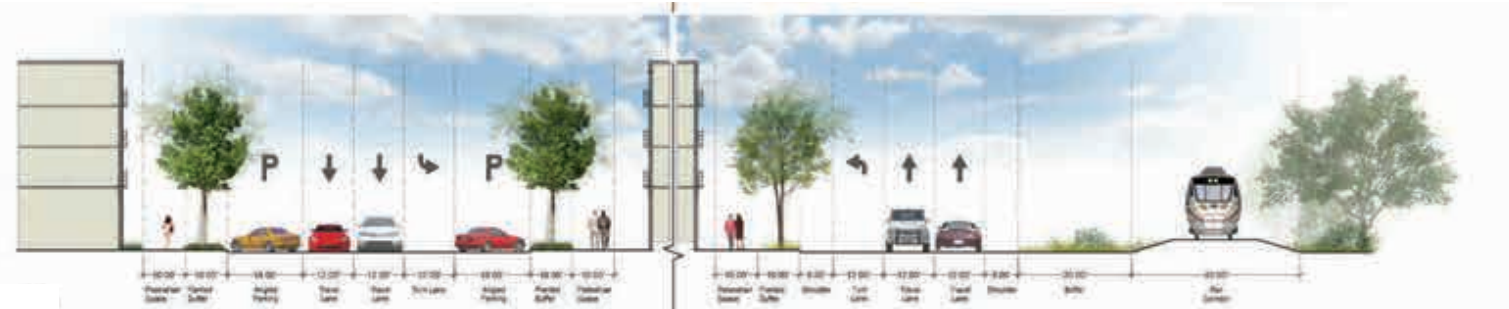


Figure 28: Split Rail Bell Boulevard Section

PICKET ALTERNATIVE

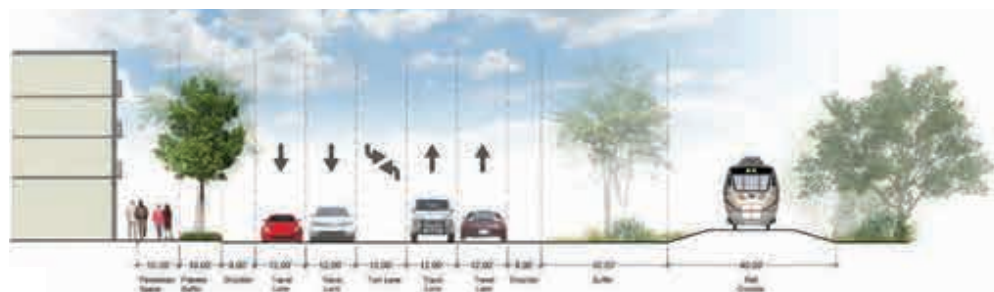


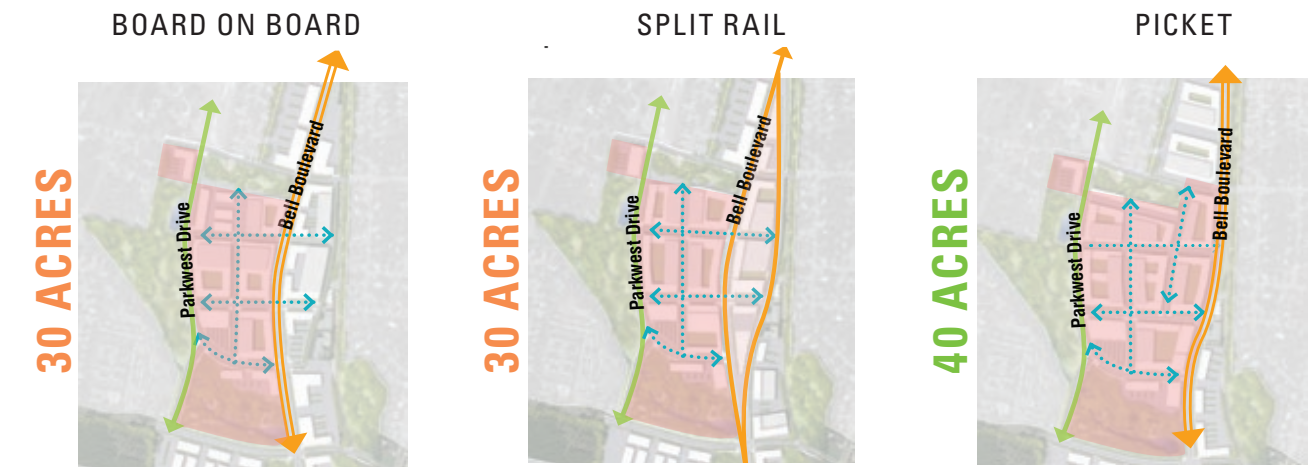
Figure 29: Picket Bell Boulevard Section

COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

The project team selected metrics to measure the goals for the project and compare against each alternative.

CONNECTED DEVELOPMENT

The core area of connected development indicates the amount of area that is likely to develop as walkable and pedestrian friendly.



* Buttercup Creek Nature Area (12 acres) not included in acreage totals

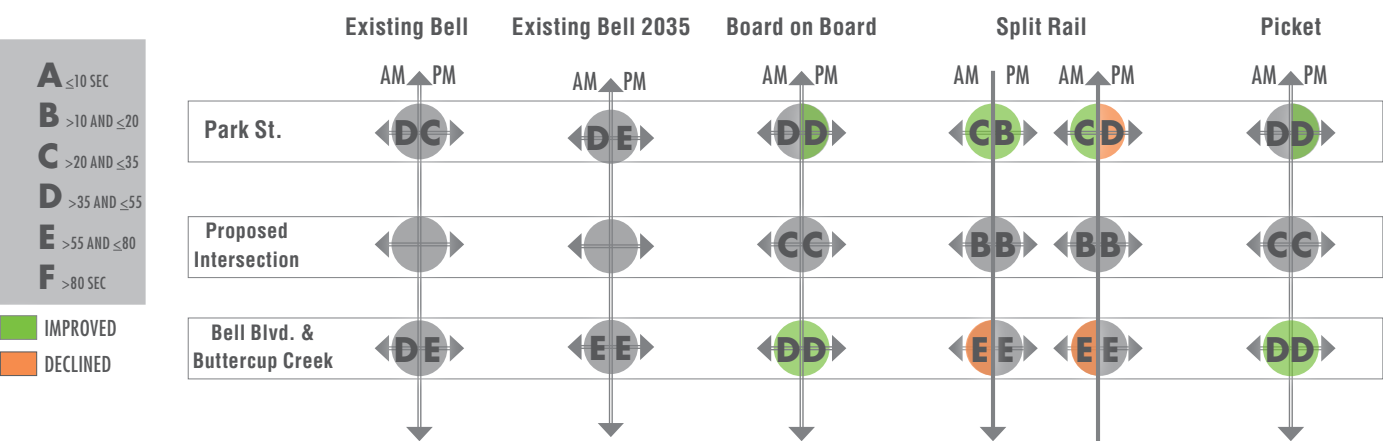
PROFITABILITY

The following icons represent the relative costs compared to revenue potential over a 20-year development period.



MOBILITY

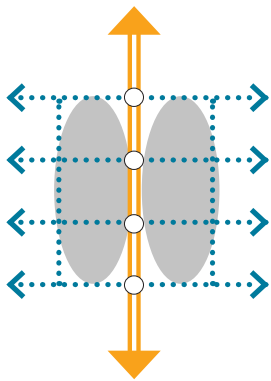
Each alternative was compared to anticipated 2035 traffic conditions along Bell Boulevard. The following diagram compares the wait time at intersections during peak congestion hours.



SUMMARY COMPARISON

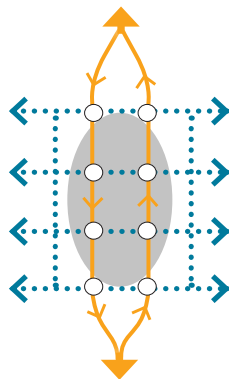
Participants at the Alternatives Workshop identified strengths and weaknesses for each of the proposed plans.

BOARD ON BOARD ALTERNATIVE



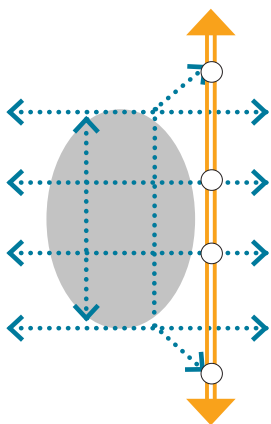
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
quick and easily implementable	does not promote pedestrian activity
familiar for current residents	results in a disparate development pattern
minimal construction-related inconvenience	too similar to existing character

SPLIT RAIL ALTERNATIVE



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
conductive to business activity	fractured development pattern
contributes to traffic calming measures	does not promote vehicular mobility
generally pedestrian friendly	poor cost-to-value ratio

PICKET ALTERNATIVE



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
generates the highest return on investment	initially disruptive to existing businesses
high degree of vehicular mobility	potential for excessive traffic noise
encourages safe pedestrian activity	high up-front costs



A new bridge over Buttercup Creek will link Cedar Park residents to the underutilized Hill Country beauty in Buttercup Creek Natural Area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the community supported master plan for Bell Boulevard. The first section explains the vision and signature elements of the preferred alternative. This section is followed by a financial assessment of the preferred plan which details the overall costs, revenues and suggested phasing plan for city investment.

The final section of this chapter presents a detailed implementation timeline of projects, programs and policies that will be needed to implement the master plan. Each recommendation has an estimated budget, timeline, potential partners and conceptual graphics that further illustrate the intent of the recommendation.



Figure 30: Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The vision for Bell Boulevard was developed through extensive engagement with key stakeholders, the community and City leaders in order to provide the City of Cedar Park with an economically vibrant gathering place and a strong sense of identity. Goals set at the beginning of the project guide the implementation of this vision. Specifically, the Picket alternative achieves the following benefits.

WHY THE PICKET ALTERNATIVE?

The Picket alternative outperformed the Split Rail and Board on Board alternatives in public opinion and metric performance. At the April 7th Alternatives Workshop, 67 percent of participants favored the Picket option, compared to Board on Board (23 percent) and Split Rail (20 percent). In addition, the Picket achieves the most acreage of connected development while improving mobility for vehicles and maximizing accessibility for pedestrians.

CREATES A CRITICAL MASS OF REDEVELOPMENT

Moving Bell Boulevard eastward provides the opportunity to reduce the width of the road where Bell Boulevard currently sits. This ensures a connected neighborhood fabric that encourages walkability, activates the community’s civic and commercial spaces and promotes an interactive, urban experience.

MAXIMIZES RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Picket alternative maximizes return on investment for the City by moving Bell Boulevard to the Old Highway 183 right of way and bringing 14 acres on the east side of Bell Boulevard into the connected pedestrian area. As illustrated in *Figure 32: Interconnected Acreage in the Picket alternative*, this move maximizes the land area that can develop as premium walkable mixed-use development.

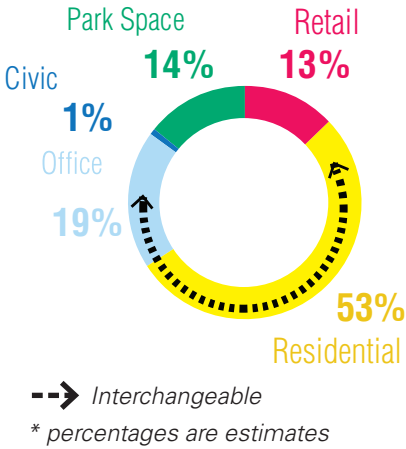


Figure 31: Picket Land Use

EXISTING



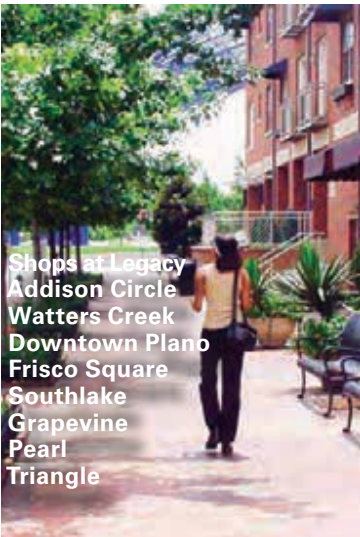
14 ACRES

PICKET



40 ACRES

AVERAGE OF BENCHMARKS



48 ACRES

Figure 32: Interconnected Acreage in the Picket alternative

IMPROVES MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

According to projections for 2035 based on current market forces, the two key intersections in the study area will have significantly increased wait times at peak operating hours by 2035. *Figure 33: Wait Times at Corridor Intersections* shows the wait times at these intersections during peak hours indicated by letters A through F. The 2015 existing conditions indicate the intersections score Cs, Ds and Es. If no improvements are made to Bell Boulevard, by 2035 all intersections will be Ds and Es. The Picket alternative can improve or hold steady all intersections from projected levels of service. This is done by adding one lane in either direction to act as an acceleration and deceleration lane and adding additional turn lanes at the intersections.

During the public engagement process, some stakeholders inquired about a “Mobility Only” option. In this scenario, the City would invest exclusively in widening Bell Boulevard for vehicular mobility. Even by widening the intersection to the extent possible, wait times only marginally improve to Cs and Ds. Since the “Mobility Only” option simply allows commuters to more quickly move through the area, it does not generate positive financial returns for businesses or the City. It does nothing to give the community the gathering space or destination they’ve asked for and also doesn’t eliminate traffic north and south of this area. The Picket alternative achieves similar level of service to the “Mobility Only” option while also maximizing return on investment and creating a community destination.

19-SECOND DECREASE
in average projected stop time
for vehicles passing through
corridor

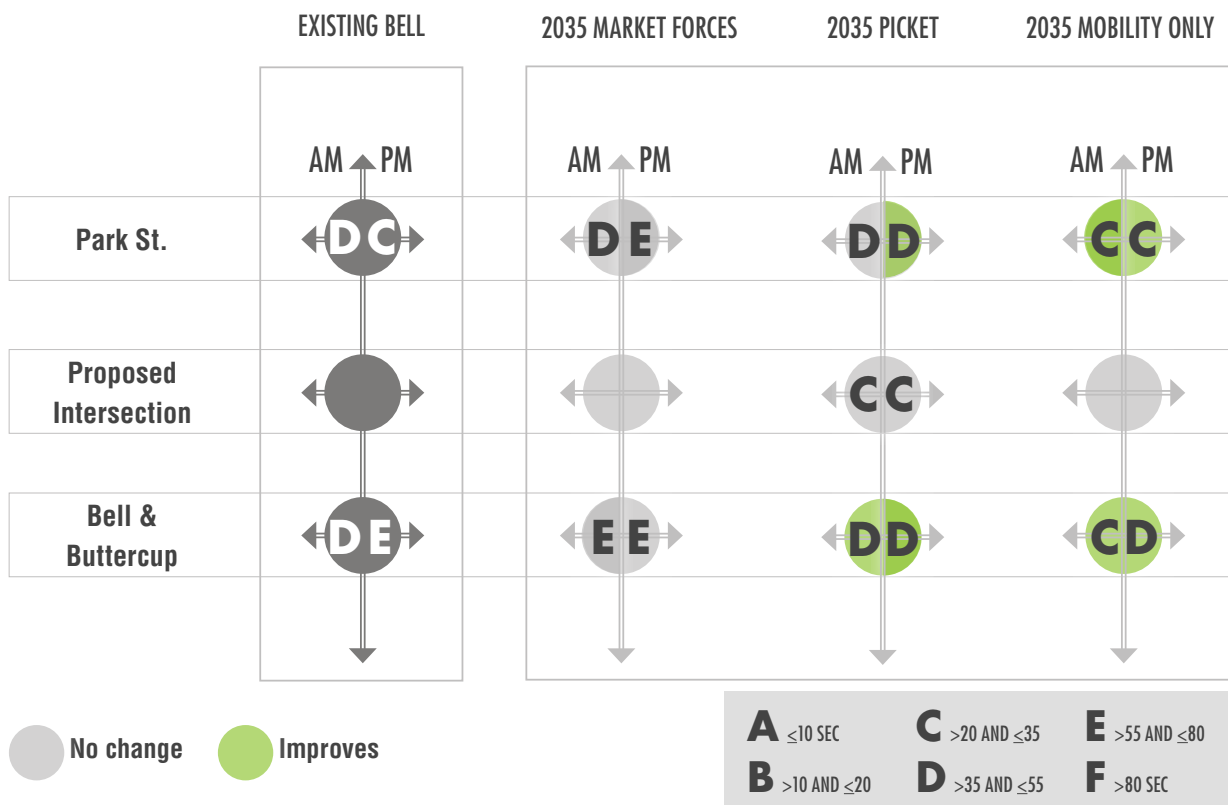


Figure 33: Wait Times at Corridor Intersections



CREATES ENERGY AMONG DIVERSE USES

A community made up of a mix of uses and functions will serve the needs of a range of users, and ensure that the private and public realms are active most of the day.

PROVIDES SAFE AND CONVENIENT ACCESSIBILITY

Block size is a critical determinant of a community's pedestrian accessibility, commercial activity and adaptability for future development. This plan achieves an average block length of 550 feet - an improvement from the existing average block length of 1900 feet.

IMPROVES ACCESS TO PLACES YOU LOVE

Currently, while trying to access businesses on Bell Boulevard users experience unpleasant "stop and go" conditions. The new conditions allow you to turn in to the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment at key intersections. This provides easier access and prevents unpleasant conditions for the daily commute.

LINKS TO MILES OF REGIONAL TRAILS

The Brushy Creek Regional Trail will connect Destination Bell Boulevard with Buttercup Creek Natural Area and give users a chance to interact with the native Hill Country ecosystem. Twelve acres are planned as undisturbed natural area and trails, which constitutes 14 percent of the total development footprint. Studies have shown that properties adjacent to open space have, on average, 12.8 percent higher per-acre value than similar properties located elsewhere.¹

DISTRIBUTES TRAFFIC INTERNALLY

Narrower internal streets provide safe vehicular traffic conditions and foster pedestrian activity. Pedestrian areas make up 52 percent of every new internal street – a departure from the approximately 18 percent currently on Bell Boulevard. The commitment to pedestrian amenities along these internal streets accounts for much of the 31 percent increase (from 7 percent to 38 percent) in dedicated pedestrian space throughout the entire development.

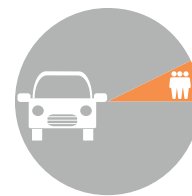
ALLOWS PEOPLE TO EXTEND THEIR VISIT

The park entry occurs at the terminus of the shopping street and the beginning of the nature trail. This allows people to park once and do many things while at Destination Bell Boulevard, like shop, work, dine and play.

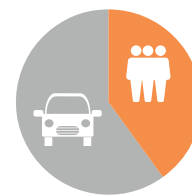
333 FEET avg. benchmark block length

550 FEET proposed block length

1900 FEET existing block length



7% existing
average dedicated
pedestrian space



38% proposed
average dedicated
pedestrian space

¹ King, D. M., Mazzotta, M., & Markowitz, K. J. (2000). *Ecosystem valuation*.

PHASING, PROJECT ECONOMICS, AND TIMELINE

PHASING

Implementing the master plan will not happen overnight. It will likely take between ten to twenty years for the project to reach maturity. It is important to phase the development in a way that maximizes return on investment and limits disruption to current residents, business owners and commuters.

PHASE 1

The preferred phasing plan begins on the east with transportation improvements on Bell Boulevard and the Bell Boulevard and Brushy Creek intersection. Construction would begin by widening Old Highway 183 while traffic is maintained on Bell Boulevard. Construction would minimally impact commuters because the current Bell Boulevard would maintain traffic levels until construction is completed on Old Highway 183.

Once the widening of Old Highway 183 is complete, the existing Bell Boulevard would be re-striped as a smaller roadway. Access would be maintained throughout the entire process for all existing developments. Depending on market conditions, construction would likely begin on the mixed-use blocks G, I and J and could potentially begin on A, C, D, F and H blocks.

The Buttercup Creek Natural Area could also be developed in the first phase of the project in order to stimulate potential development on the west side of the district and provide recreational amenities to the current and future residents. Temporary access and parking would be provided.

PHASE 2

The second phase would happen as development moves west toward the park. The second phase would likely include the remaining western portions of the shopping street, the interior walkable blocks and the parkway road and bridge connecting to the Buttercup Creek Natural Area. Depending on market conditions, construction would likely begin on the remaining blocks.

COSTS

The total estimated cost of public investment would be \$49-\$51 million. This number is an estimate of land acquisition (only right of way property required for the infrastructure improvements), design, engineering and construction of all proposed public improvements including park improvements, street network, relocating and undergrounding utilities, moving Bell Boulevard and intersection improvements. The funding would come from a public-private partnership made up of a variety of sources including grants, economic development incentives, capital improvement and private developments. This cost includes an escalation of 3 percent in order to account for the sustained increase in the general prices for material and labor over the entirety of the project.



Figure 34: Phase 1



Figure 35: Phase 2

PROJECT ECONOMICS

REVENUES

The City of Cedar Park will receive revenue from the increased property and sales tax generated by the proposed development over time. The estimated revenue during the 20-year period analyzed is \$115 - \$180 million, net of revenues currently generated by existing improvements and property in the project area. Although revenues generated by existing improvements in the study area have been declining in recent years (while rising in most every other commercial zone in the city), the project team conservatively assumed property values would remain constant rather than decline.

The range of revenues is based upon varying assumptions regarding future property values and sales tax revenues. At the low end of the revenue projection, the project team is assuming conservative future sales tax revenues and property values for apartments, office space and retail space, which are based upon newer developments representative of what is found in Cedar Park today. The high end of the range assumes values that are more consistent with mixed-use, urban developments, though lower than those values found at such developments at The Domain, which is larger in scale and more visible than the proposed Cedar Park development, and is a more established regional destination. New development occurs over a 15-20 year timeframe, and tax revenues from new development do not accrue until a parcel transitions from an existing land use to a proposed future land use, the timing of which is driven by the market analysis conducted by the project team. The revenues from new development are escalated at 3 percent annually to reflect inflationary pressures and to be consistent with the cost escalations.

PAYBACK PERIOD

Payback period in capital budgeting refers to the period of time required to recoup the funds expended in an investment, or to reach the break-even point. The estimated payback period for City investment would be between 14 and 17 years, with a return on investment of between 8 percent and 11 percent, depending upon the taxable values assumed for future development.

TIMELINE

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

There are ten major public improvement projects proposed in the master plan. These projects will take approximately ten years to implement. *Figure 37: Project Implementation Timeline* presents an estimate of the projects that will be implemented in phase one and phase two. In addition to public improvement projects, there will also be policies, programs and private development needed to make the plan a reality.

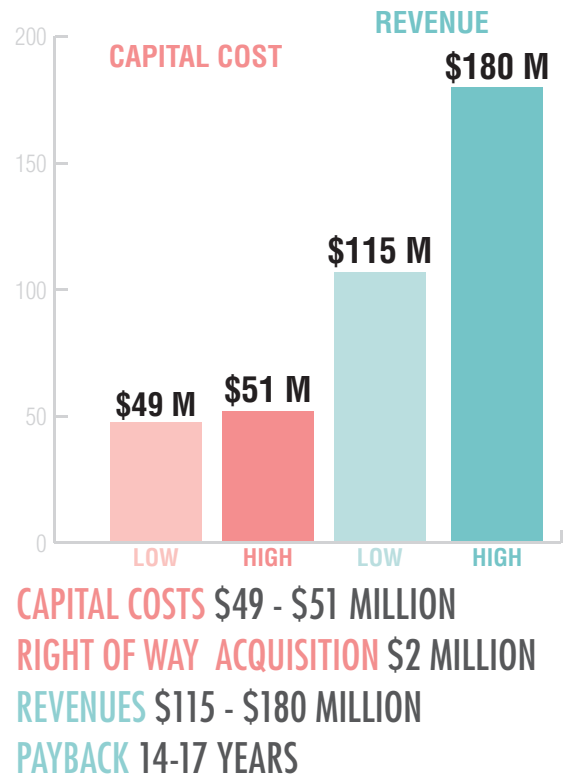


Figure 36: Projected Costs and Revenues

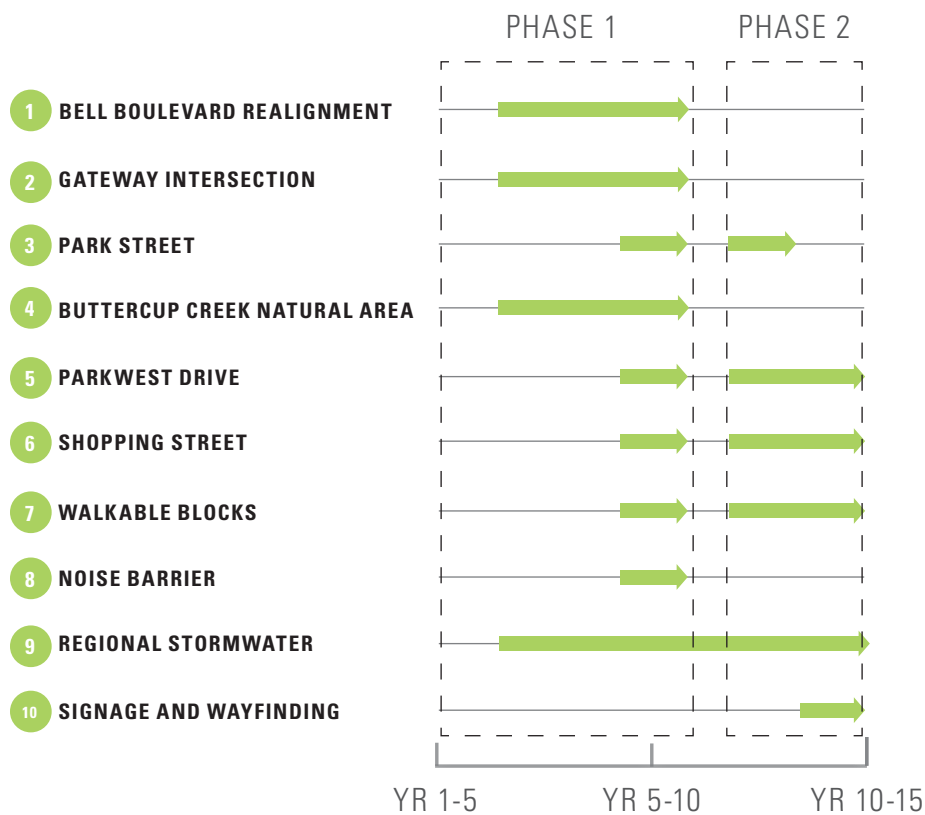


Figure 37: Project Implementation Timeline

PHASING CONSIDERATIONS

Market support is initially strongest for an offering of apartments and retail space, some of which should be delivered in a mixed-use format, with apartments vertically integrated over ground-floor retail. Care should be taken to ensure that the first phase of development is cohesive and compact enough such that a walkable destination is allowed to form as soon as possible. Further phases of development should be incremental in nature, expanding the already established district outward. After a vibrant place begins to take shape with a mix of residents, shoppers, and visitors coming into and out of Bell Boulevard – an environment employers are looking for and unable to find currently in Cedar Park – the opportunity for delivering office space becomes more desirable. The blocks to be constructed will be flexible enough in size to respond to market forces, with the ability to scale in density or change in use as needed. *Figure 38: Hypothetical Development Program on page 57* suggests when market support potentially exists for different types of real estate products based upon current market trends in Cedar Park.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Moving the master plan into the implementation phase is not a straightforward process. Development economics demand a phased process, multiple land-owners currently own the underlying land on which the master plan would be developed, and the comprehensive recommendations detailed in this report will require the ongoing support of and coordination between a variety of stakeholders. With the above in mind, there are numerous roles the City of Cedar Park can take in implementing the development vision. The following narrative will generally outline these roles under three scenarios:

- Scenario A: the City will only acquire the necessary right of way to implement the infrastructure improvements necessary to facilitate redevelopment, and then rely on the market to drive new development
- Scenario B: the City will only acquire the necessary right of way to implement the infrastructure improvements necessary to facilitate redevelopment, and then facilitate a public private partnership between existing land owners and developers to drive new development
- Scenario C: the City acquires strategic property targeted for redevelopment

Regardless of which scenario above occurs, the City has two primary considerations in deciding what role to play in Bell Boulevard’s implementation: 1) the level of control it wishes to have over the project; and 2) the level of risk it is willing to accept. *Figure 39: City Roles in Site Development on page 58* briefly outlines the three scenarios and the relative levels of control and risk associated with each.

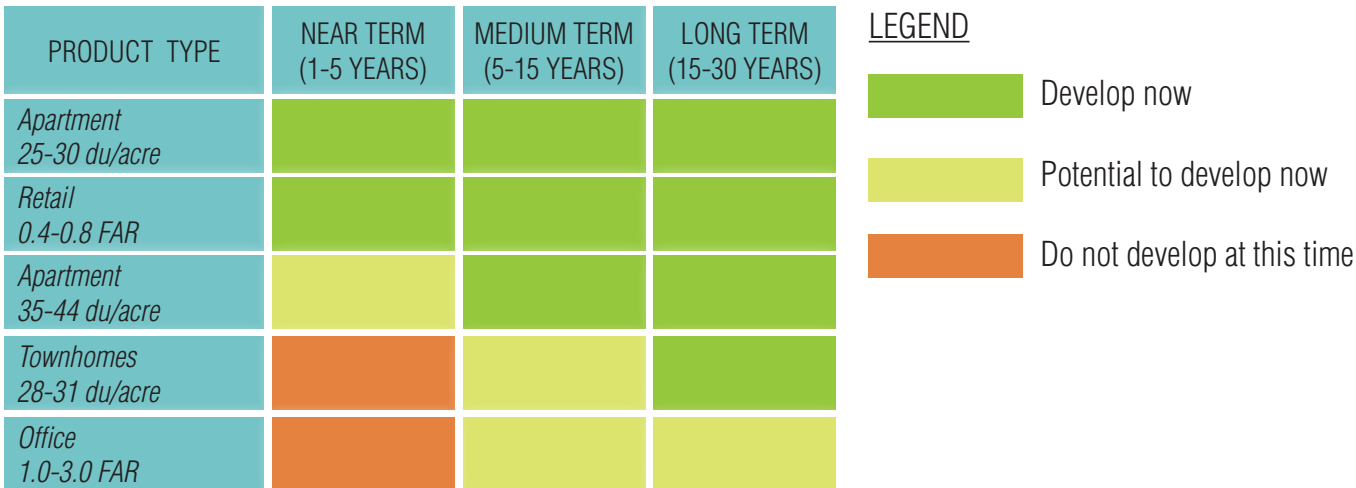


Figure 38: Hypothetical Development Program

In Scenario A, we assume the City does not acquire any property other than the land required to implement major infrastructure improvements. In this scenario, the City would complete infrastructure improvements to facilitate redevelopment, though would largely rely on developers and market forces to make vertical construction a reality. The City would have less control over the outcome of the project than the other two scenarios, but could adopt a master plan, which might include various codes and overlays that would serve as the guiding document regarding land use form (not function) and density. The infrastructure improvements themselves (and any associated infrastructure financing district such as a TIF) would certainly serve as an incentive to private developers, though they would have to engage with existing land owners to purchase land parcels and develop them in accordance with the master plan guidelines. This process may require the need for one or more developers to engage in multiple transactions with multiple landowners which could take a long time, depending upon how efficiently and effectively these negotiations take place.

Like Scenario A, Scenario B assumes the City acquires only the property required to implement major infrastructure improvements. In this scenario, however, the City no longer relies on the developer market to catalyze development. The City instead engages land owners in a constructive negotiation that allows them to contribute their land as equity into a joint venture with private developers (essentially another form of public private partnerships). Existing land owners would do this in exchange for a preferred return on the upside of the land values once the land is developed. This allows the City to push the project forward by accelerating agreements between land owners and developers, but without the need to

DEAL STRUCTURE	SCENARIO A "MARKET FORCES"	SCENARIO B "PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP"	SCENARIO C "PUBLIC SECTOR AS DEVELOPER"
DESCRIPTION	Developer conducts individual acquisition/development deals	Public sector facilitates public private partnership between land owners and private developers	Public sector partners with private sector on property, develops infrastructure, and sells/leases parcels to vertical builders
RISK BEARER	Developer	Land owners, Public sector, Developers	Public sector
DISTRIBUTIONS	None to Public sector	Land owners, developers share upside potential	Public sector
PUBLIC SECTOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	None	As limited partner, based on negotiated deal	Complete

Figure 39: City Roles in Site Development

raise capital for the acquisition of land owner parcels (Scenario C). It does, however, require an extensive and involved legal process for constructing the terms of participation and structuring the mechanisms for equity return to land owner/investors. As a stakeholder in the partnership, the City would maintain somewhat more control over the outcome of the development than Scenario A, and through its contribution of infrastructure improvements validate its commitment to the project. This will likely require additional staff at the City to facilitate this process.

Scenario C accelerates the purchase of strategic pieces of land from multiple owners to one owner (the City) as opposed to waiting for multiple entities to emerge and purchase land one parcel or one segment at a time (Scenario A), or navigating a complex legal process (Scenario B). With this process accelerated, the project can be moved to the execution phase sooner. However, this process does require that the public sector be capitalized and funded to conduct the land acquisition, though it also allows the City to maintain the most control over the project. At the high end of the risk spectrum in this scenario, the City serves as the development entity which could result in a potentially high, though long-term payoff. At the low end of the risk spectrum (except of course the risk of carrying the land), the City simply sells the property to prospective developers once the infrastructure improvements are completed. In the middle of the spectrum, the City maintains ownership of the land and either leases it to prospective developers in a public private partnership or contributes the land into a joint venture arrangement with a developer. These types of partnerships can be powerful incentives to attract developers, who may wish to own and operate the vertical improvements on the property, but want to reduce their overall risk by avoiding costly land acquisitions and the carry costs associated with owning land.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

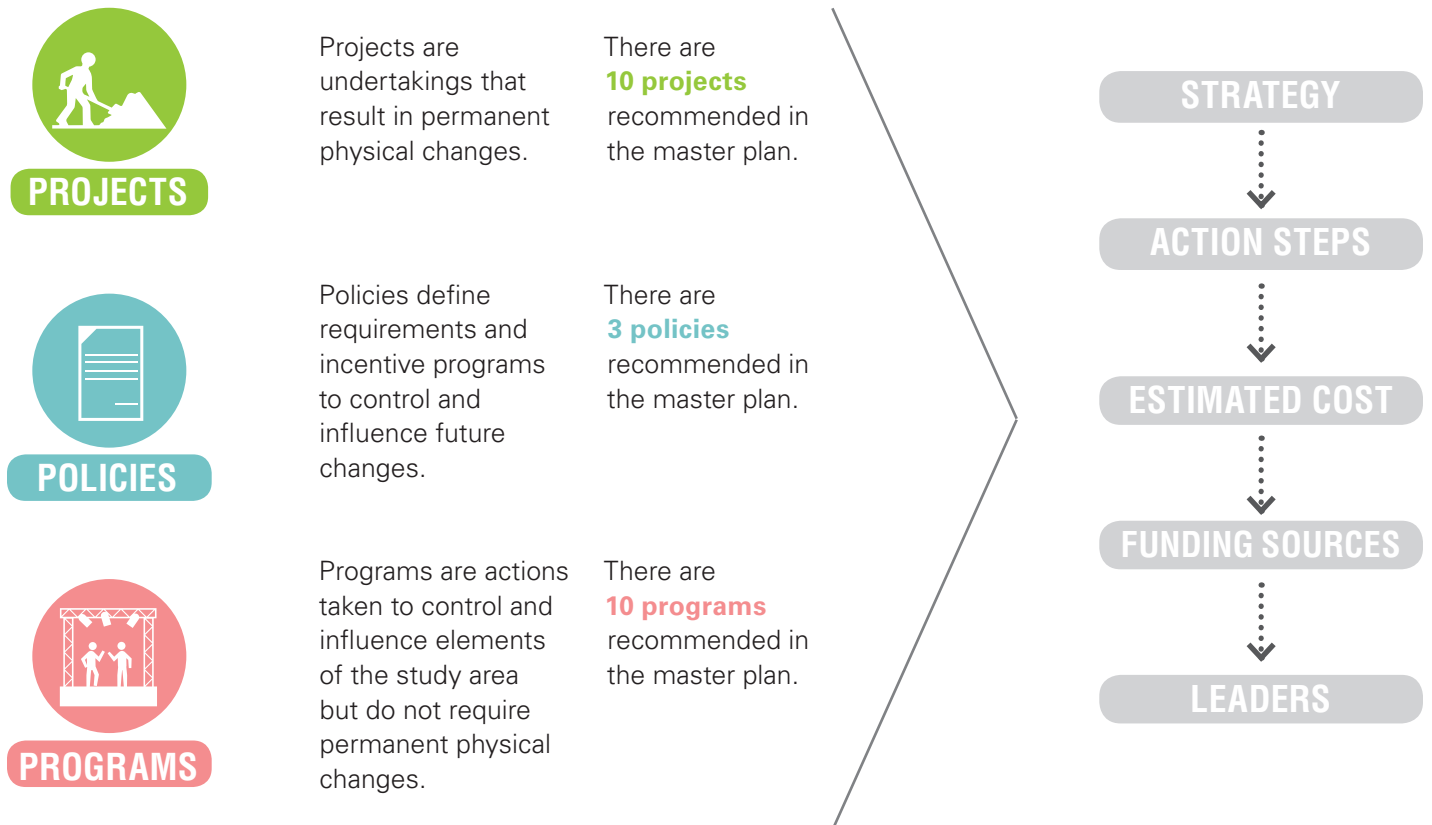
POLICIES, PROJECTS, AND PROGRAMS

This section provides detailed next steps that Cedar Park and local leaders can take to implement the preferred alternative. There are a total of 10 projects, 3 policies and 10 programs that will move this plan forward from a vision to a reality.

The following pages are meant to serve as stand alone fact sheets that present each strategy in detail.

Implementation strategies provide a roadmap for success. With an emphasis on the planning and regulatory framework, incentives and financial tools and capital improvements, they provide the necessary actions that will advance the long-term vision of the master plan.

Each strategy includes a detailed list of next steps, estimated costs, potential funding sources and leading entities. The recommendations will be useful in guiding the City in defining programs, setting priorities, allocating finances and assessing achievements. Over time, this part of the Master Plan should be revisited and updated to ensure that the strategies remain relevant and current to Bell Boulevard as it evolves.



PROJECTS

PROJECTS ARE UNDERTAKINGS THAT RESULT IN PERMANENT PHYSICAL CHANGES. THERE ARE 10 MAJOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS PROPOSED IN THE MASTER PLAN. THESE PROJECTS SHOULD TAKE APPROXIMATELY 10-20 YEARS TO IMPLEMENT AND SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ACROSS TWO PHASES.





1

BELL BOULEVARD REALIGNMENT

Bell Boulevard is a very wide roadway. In its current condition, it serves as a divider between the eastern and western portions of the study area. The width of the street poses challenges to vehicles and pedestrians seeking to visit businesses and amenities along both sides of Bell Boulevard.

Realigning Bell Boulevard maximizes the connected core by 14 additional acres, to create 40 continuous acres for the district. The Picket alternative envisions Bell Boulevard with shaded pedestrian sidewalks, a planted median, enhanced lighting, landscaping, signage and drainage features that beautify the space.

The Picket alternative proposes an additional signalized intersection at the juncture of the shopping street and Bell Boulevard to provide protected pedestrian crossings and left turns for southbound traffic. The additional lanes enable visitors to easily turn into the district without slowing traffic for commuters. Entry and exits to parking areas along Bell Boulevard will be minimized to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and improve traffic flow efficiency.

Vehicular improvements would include a decreased delay (from 35-55 seconds to 20-35 seconds) for motorists traveling through the intersection during both the morning and the evening hours. This means less time spent in traffic for residents moving through the study area.

ACTION STEPS

- Continue discussions with TXDOT
- Secure funding
- Acquire necessary portions of right of way (approximately 12 months to acquire all needed right of way along Bell Boulevard)
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (approximately 15 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (approximately 18 months)
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Bell Boulevard Improvements—approximately \$18,500,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- State Infrastructure Bank (SIB)

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)
- Cedar Park Public Works Department

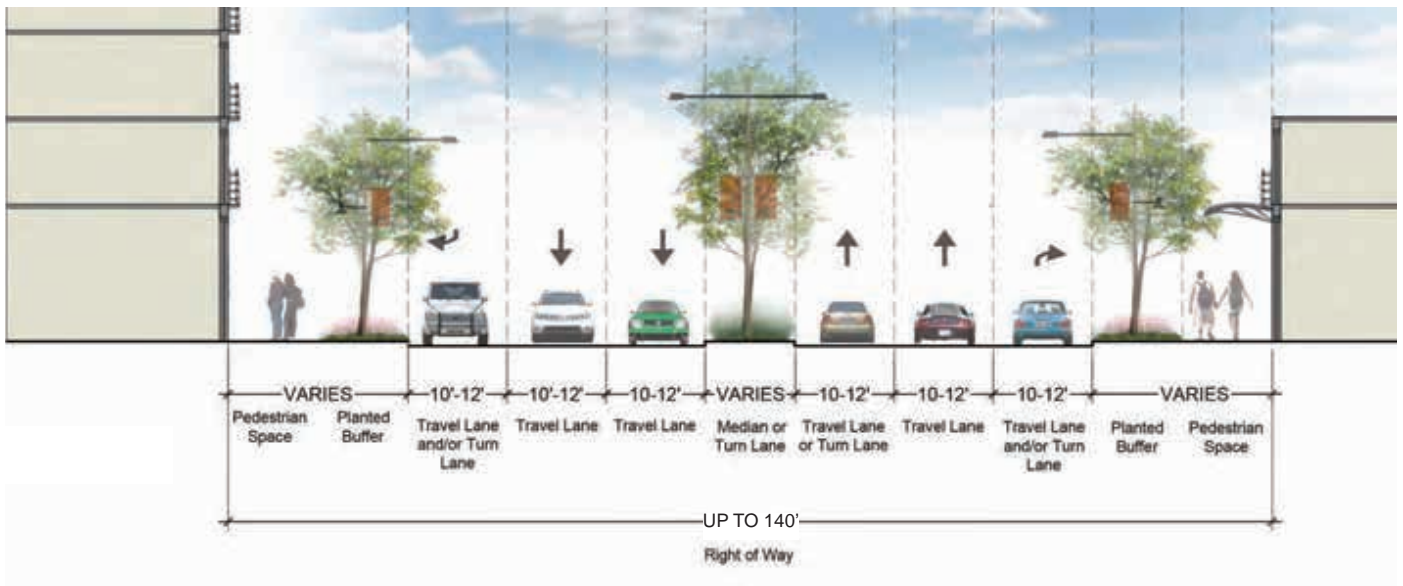


Figure 41: Typical Bell Boulevard (North) Illustrative



Figure 42: Relocate Bell Boulevard

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

- 6-lanes, two-way travel
- Large median with left turn lanes
- Expanded intersections
- Roadway detailing (pavement, drains, curbs, gutters)
- Enhanced lighting
- Relocated water and wastewater
- Relocated or buried overhead utilities
- Pedestrian improvements
- Traffic signalization





2

GATEWAY AT BELL BOULEVARD AND BUTTERCUP CREEK

The Cedar Park community has expressed concerns about mobility challenges on Bell Boulevard. One of the key culprits is the low level of service that exists on Bell Boulevard at the Brushy Creek intersection. This six-way intersection has been identified as confusing for motorists and dangerous for pedestrians.

The Picket alternative simplifies this juncture down to a standard four-way intersection. If implemented with quality design, materials and safety features, this new and improved intersection could act as a signature gateway into the district. Pedestrian improvements would include a 55 percent reduction in the crossing distance. This can be done with no impact to mobility of vehicles. Gateway improvements also provide shaded sidewalks along Buttercup Creek Boulevard and Brushy Creek Road and trail connections to 30 miles of regional hike and bike trails. These improvements would likely happen simultaneously with the Bell Boulevard Realignment project to maximize efficiency and minimize construction.

ACTION STEPS

- Continue discussions with TXDOT
- Secure funding
- Acquire necessary portions of right of way (approximately 12 months to acquire all needed right of way along Bell Boulevard)
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (approximately 15 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (approximately 18 months)
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Bell Boulevard/Brushy Creek Road intersection, turn lane and pedestrian improvements—approximately \$2,200,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- State Infrastructure Bank (SIB)

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)
- Cedar Park Public Works Department

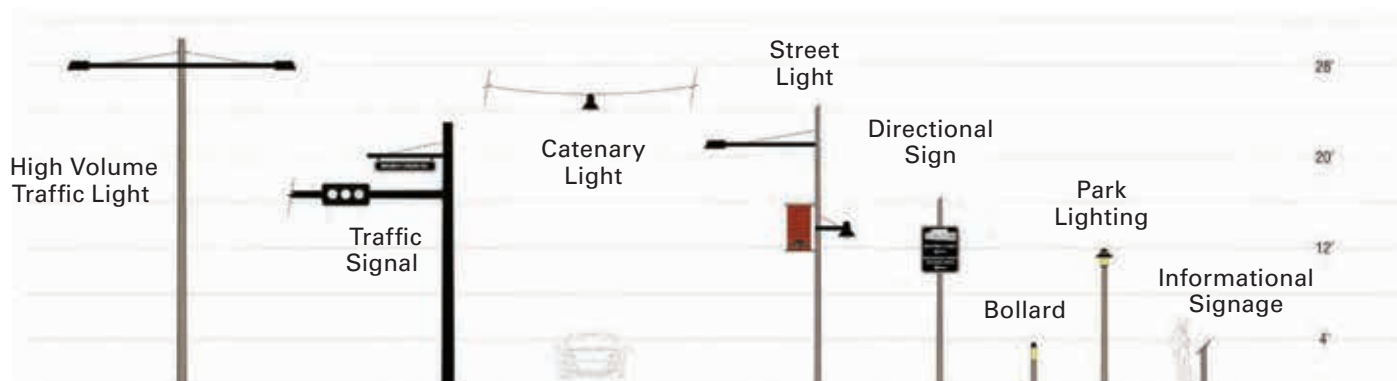


Figure 43: Hierarchy of Identity Elements Throughout District



Street/Pedestrian Light



Fencing

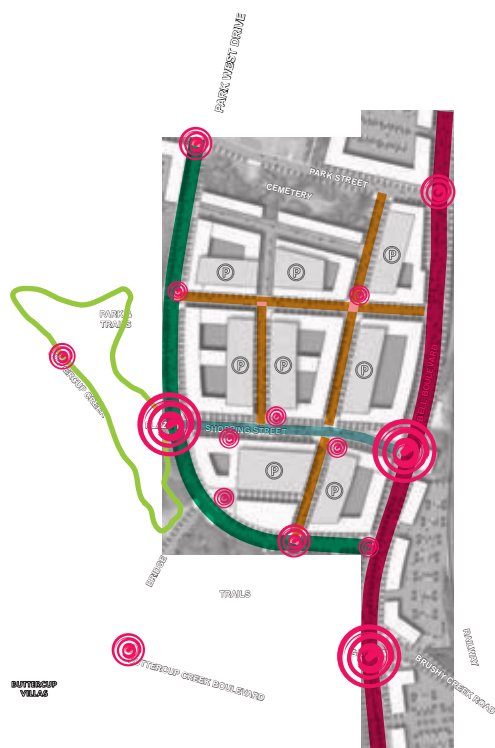


Catenary Light



Park Light

Figure 44: Gateway and Identity Kit of Parts



- **Shopping Street**
Street Light, Directional Signage, Catenary Light, Bollard
- **Walkable Blocks**
Street Light, Directional Signage, Bollard
- **Buttercup Creek Natural Area Trails**
High Volume Traffic Light, Traffic Signal, Street Light, Directional Signage
- **Parkwest Drive**
High Volume Traffic Light, Traffic Signal, Street Light, Directional Signage
- **Bell Boulevard**
High Volume Traffic Light, Traffic Signal, Street Light, Directional Signage
- ◎ **Art or Gateway Opportunity** (size of icon indicates the level of importance)

Figure 45: Gateway Opportunities and Identity Feature Locations

PROJECTS



3

PARK STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Park Street is an east-west collector road that runs along the northern border of the study area and connects to many residential neighborhoods throughout the city. The Picket alternative proposes long-term improvements to the intersection at Bell Boulevard and Park Street including; utility adjustments, additional turn lanes and an added left turn intersection at Parkwest Drive for visitors turning into the district.

ACTION STEPS

- Continue discussions with TXDOT
- Secure funding
- Acquire necessary portions of right of way (approximately 12 months to acquire all needed right of way along Bell Boulevard)
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (approximately 15 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (approximately 18 months)
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Park Street Improvements—approximately \$250,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)
- Cedar Park Public Works Department



Figure 46: Location of Improvements on Park Street

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

- Expanded intersections
- Roadway detailing (pavement, drains, curbs, gutters)
- Enhanced lighting
- Relocated water and wastewater
- Relocated or buried overhead utilities
- Pedestrian improvements
- Traffic signalization

PROJECTS



4

BUTTERCUP CREEK NATURAL AREA

According to the 2015 Parks Master Plan, the area around Buttercup Creek is one of the oldest settled areas in the City. Buttercup Creek Natural Area is a large area that provides access to nature and to preserve key natural assets in the City. Natural areas typically have little development beyond parking and trails. The park improvements proposed in the Picket alternative could include restoring 12 acres of undeveloped natural area into a recreational amenity for the residents of Cedar Park. This could provide 2.5 miles of nature trails, family gathering spaces such as picnic areas, restrooms and a native garden for visitors to learn about the flora and fauna native to Cedar Park. This project would also restore the natural area by removing invasive species to ensure maximum health of Buttercup Creek. An active area of the park could be included adjacent to the main shopping street in order to provide additional gathering and seating space for visitors, as well as family oriented recreation such as a playground and interactive water feature.

ACTION STEPS

- Secure funding
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (approximately 8 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (approximately 12 months)
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Park Improvements—approximately \$2,000,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- Grants

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Parks and Recreation Department
- Cedar Park Engineering Department



Buttercup Creek Natural Area should be a place for all residents to use for various occasions.

Figure 47: Illustrative Park Renderings

project highlight: the park

THE PARK AT BUTTERCUP CREEK NATURAL AREA

Creating a strong connection between the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment and neighboring Buttercup Creek Natural Area is a critical facet of the corridor's placemaking strategy. A park along Buttercup Creek would serve the recreational and social needs of residents and visitors by leveraging the community's substantial natural assets. Throughout the public outreach effort, this project received a large amount of support and is a vital component of creating a unique sense of place and a regional draw for the district. The following section outlines the conceptual, programmatic, and schematic features of such a park.

CONCEPT

Buttercup Creek Natural Area should serve two separate and seemingly contradictory functions. First, it should be an outdoor extension of the vibrant public realm established along the shopping street with which it connects, suitable for both neighborhood gatherings and larger civic events. Second, the park should provide spaces for outdoor recreation and quiet contemplation, celebrating the character of the natural assets that it preserves.

Spatially separating these two types of park programming will allow Cedar Park to achieve both of these goals. Concentrating the park's more intensive uses (plaza, playgrounds, restrooms) along the natural area's eastern most edge will connect this kind of programming to the urban activity within the development. It will also maximize the natural areas, in particular the riparian areas along Buttercup Creek and the woodland areas throughout the park. Finally, a green infrastructure network and a system of wayfinding, signage and lighting elements will physically and visually link the corridor's social and ecological realms.

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL COMPATIBILITY

Programs can be more specifically located based on a careful consideration of how compatible they are with each other, and how compatible they are with the site's environmental character. *Figure 49: Social Compatibility Matrix* suggests the degree to which priority programs can be appropriately sited near one another. While *Figure 50: Existing Ecology Diagram* analyzes key ecological features that will influence program siting decisions and park design.



Concentrating the park's more intensive programming along its eastern edge will preserve the character of the natural features near the creek, a network of green infrastructure and artistic gateway features will functionally and aesthetically link the development to the park.

KEY

- ● ● sidewalk rain garden
- — — bioretention area

Figure 48: Proposed Green Network

Program elements are scored based on the degree to which they are spatially compatible. Programs that share lower scores are more spatially compatible.

PRIORITY PROGRAMS	PRIORITY PROGRAMS	Restrooms	Plaza	Interactive Water Feature	Native Gardens	Playgrounds	Buttercup Creek	Soft Paths	Hard Paths	Picnic Shelter
Restrooms		1	1	3	1	3	2	1	1	
Plaza		1	2	2	2	3	3	1	3	
Interactive Water Feature		1	2	2	1	3	2	2	2	
Native Gardens		3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	
Playgrounds		1	2	1	2	3	3	1	2	
Buttercup Creek		3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	
Soft Paths		2	3	2	2	3	1	3	2	
Hard Paths		1	1	2	2	1	3	3	2	
Picnic Shelter		1	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	

ELEMENTS

1: programs should be located near each other

2: programs could be located near each other

3: programs should not be located near each other

DEFINITIONS

Restrooms: bathrooms and changing facility

Plaza: multi-use public gathering space

Interactive water feature: dynamic, non-natural water amenity

Native gardens: planting can range from more recognizable savannah species to wetland and riparian species closer to Buttercup Creek

Playgrounds: nature-based or more constructed

Buttercup Creek: existing creek amenity

Soft paths: unpaved trails for recreation

Hard paths: paved sidewalks

Picnic shelter: open-air structure with permanent grills for small outdoor gatherings

Figure 49: Social Compatibility Matrix



Figure 50: Existing Ecology Diagram

Analyzing existing soil conditions, topography and digital imagery helps determine the ecological compatibility of priority programs throughout the park site. In particular, the native gardens will be sensitive to this kind of ecological information. Additionally, mapping the location of existing meadows will influence the siting of open space programming and reduce the need to clear woodlands.

KEY

- Eckrant-Rock outcrop complex, rolling
- Eckrant cobbly clay, 1-8% slopes
- Fairlie clay, 1-2% slopes
- Existing meadow

project highlight: the park

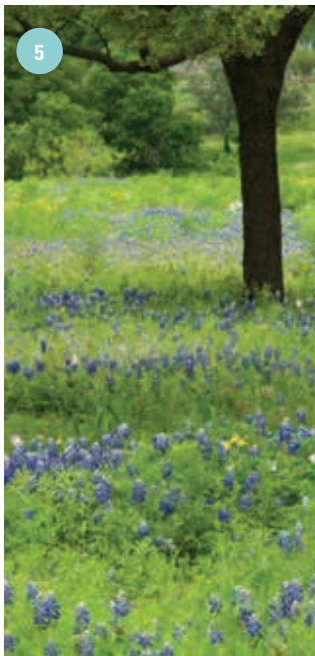
URBAN EDGE

As an extension of the development's main commercial and pedestrian street, the more intensive programming on the eastern edge of the park should create a social, urban character. *Figure 51: Park Concept Diagram on page 73* illustrates where urban edge programming is recommended.



NATURAL SPACE

By concentrating the intensive uses near the urban edge of the park, the rest of Buttercup Creek Natural Area can be preserved and enjoyed for recreation and quiet contemplation. *Figure 51: Park Concept Diagram on page 73* illustrates where natural space programming is recommended.



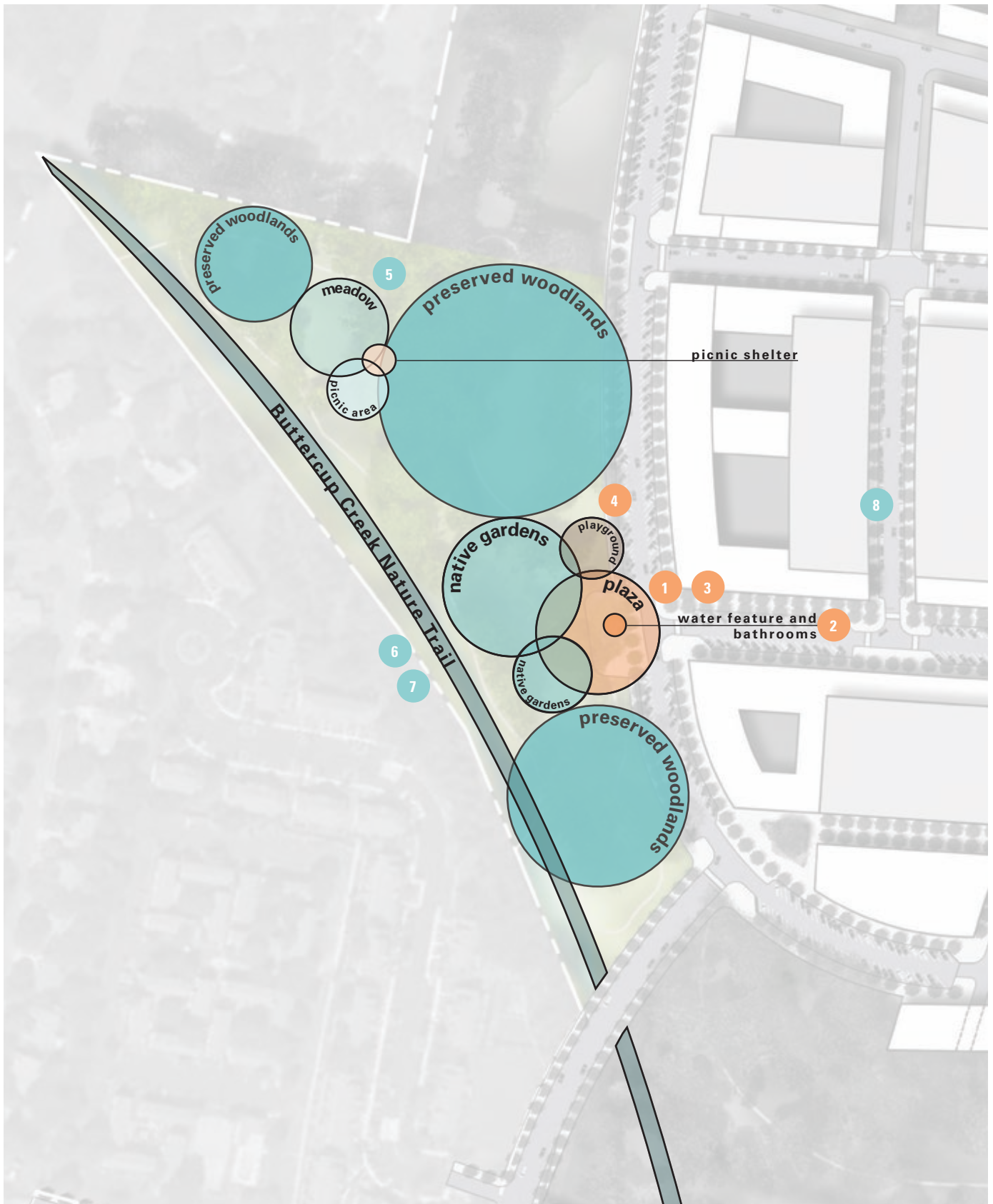


Figure 51: Park Concept Diagram



5

PARKWEST DRIVE

Today, the Buttercup Creek Natural Area is inaccessible by public trails or sidewalks and difficult to see from nearby roadways. Benchmark studies (see Chapter 3) have shown the importance of having both visual and physical access to a natural amenity within a close walking distance to a shopping district. Research on what makes a successful shopping district indicates that nearly 70 percent of the districts studied have a major amenity like a park within a 10-minute walk.

The Picket alternative proposes the Parkwest Drive as a tree lined, signature parkway that runs along the edge of the Buttercup Creek Natural Area connecting Park Street to Bell Boulevard. A 'kickstand' road bridges across Buttercup Creek and connects Parkwest Drive to Buttercup Boulevard. In addition to connecting nearby residents to the park, Parkwest Drive serves as an alternate north/south connector for accommodating overflow traffic from Bell Boulevard. The street includes on-street parking and retail uses on the ground floor of the eastern side of the street that overlook the park and spill out onto the tree lined sidewalks and public spaces.

ACTION STEPS

- Secure funding
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (approximately 10 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (approximately 12 months)
- Operations and Maintenance Plan

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

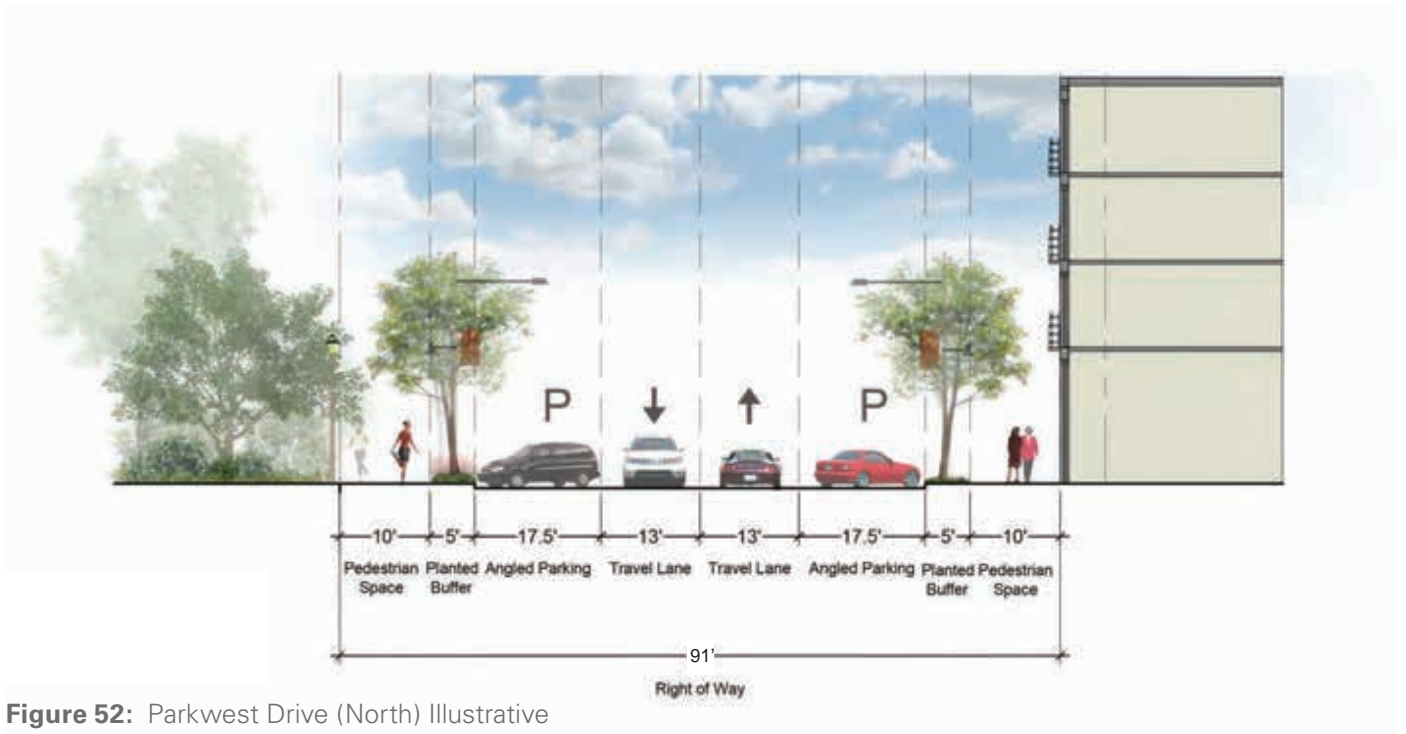
- Parkwest Drive—approximately \$5,500,000
- Bridge and Spur Connection –approximately \$3,000,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- Private Property Owners and Development Interests

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Cedar Park Parks and Recreation Department
- Cedar Park Public Works Department
- Private Property Owners and Development Interests



The new park plaza will serve as a transition from the main shopping street to the Buttercup Creek Natural Area.



A new water feature provides for a relaxing and aesthetically pleasing amenity.

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

- 2-lane, multi-directional
- Angled parking on each side
- Custom pavement
- Enhanced storm drains, curbs and gutters
- Utilities upgrades
- Pedestrian improvements
- Wet pond and ditch improvements
- Bridge and spur
- Enhanced lighting



6

SHOPPING STREET

The current traffic conditions along Bell Boulevard do not encourage a walkable shopping experience. Sidewalks positioned next to fast moving traffic do not feel safe for pedestrians, families and visitors. However, the daily traffic Bell Boulevard carries is essential to the success of a retail destination. Research has shown that successful shopping streets need direct access to a primary arterial road that carries a large amount of vehicular traffic. In most cases, shopping streets are perpendicular to the main traffic carrying arterial in order to benefit from the trips per day and provide a safe and comfortable experience for shoppers to walk from one store to another.

The Picket alternative proposes a shopping street perpendicular to Bell Boulevard located in between Park Street and Buttercup Boulevard. Additional left turn lanes provide protected turns onto the shopping street for northbound traffic on Bell Boulevard. The shopping street terminates at Parkwest Drive and Buttercup Creek Natural Area. The street itself can be designed to serve as a flexible plaza space for market activities or events. The proposed shopping street will feature two lanes of traffic with angled parking on both sides. Shaded sidewalks provide a comfortable walking experience for pedestrians traveling between destinations. The sidewalks will accommodate restaurant patios, beautiful planting areas and seating for visitors. Flexible opportunities for parking and signature planting elements, public art opportunities and signage will brand the district.

ACTION STEPS

- Secure funding
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (approximately 10 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (approximately 10 months)
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

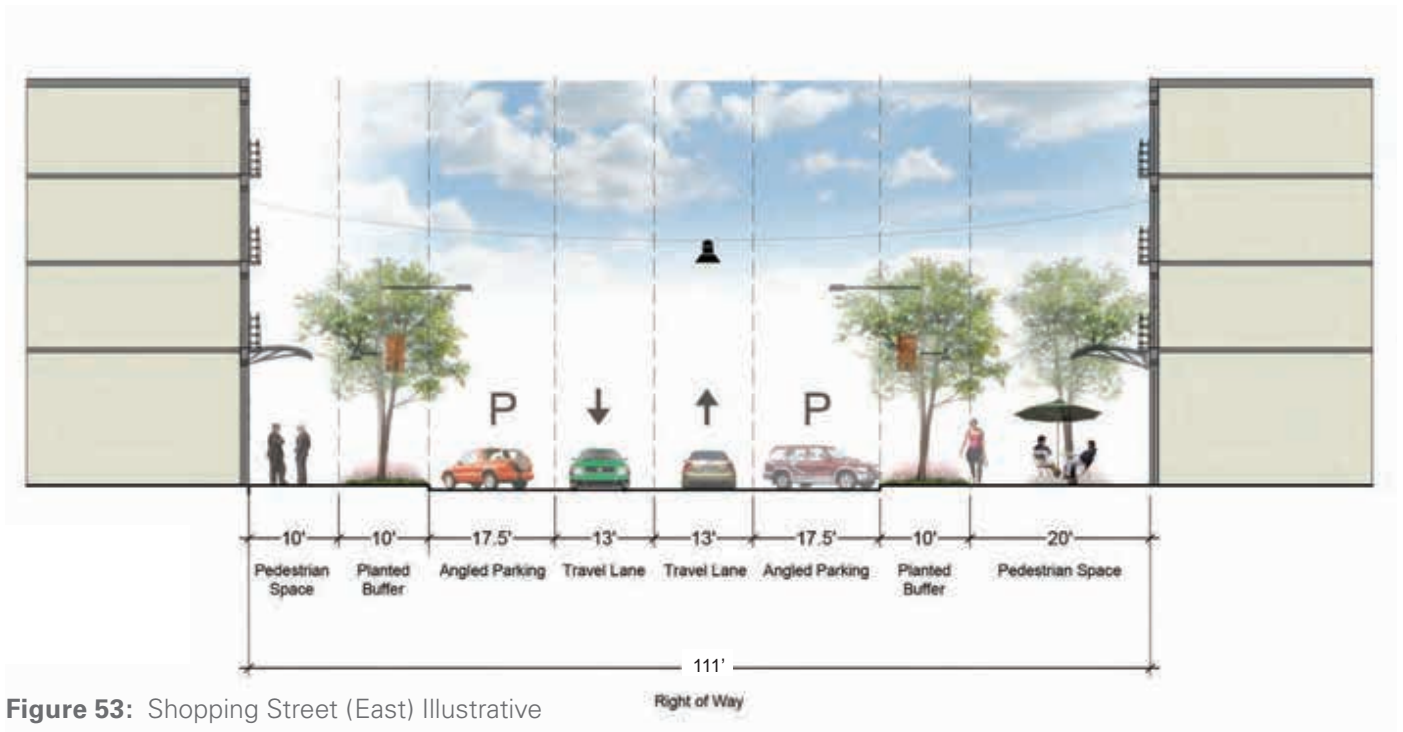
- Shopping Street—approximately \$3,500,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- Private Property Owners and Development Interests

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Private Property Owners and Development Interests
- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Cedar Park Public Works Department



The main shopping street provides comfortable pedestrian space for guests.



7

CREATE WALKABLE BLOCKS

Bell Boulevard's existing blocks are roughly 2,000 feet long. A long block can discourage pedestrians from walking to their intended destination. Today, there are few pedestrians who use Bell Boulevard. Research has found that successful districts support a critical mass of residents and local workers. This equates to a minimum pedestrian activity of 1,000 people per peak hour passing within the core. Bell Boulevard needs a significant amount of pedestrians to make a successful district. The Picket alternative envisions making this area better for pedestrians through a series of internal streets with sidewalks and on-street parking that provide access throughout the district. Research indicates that average block length is between 300-500 feet in length in walkable districts. *Figure 55: Walkable Blocks Diagram* illustrates the blocks proposed in the Picket alternative. The block sizes range between 300-500 feet. The implementation of these internal walkable streets could occur incrementally as the district develops.

ACTION STEPS

- Secure funding
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (approximately 15 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (approximately 18 months)
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Walkable Blocks—approximately \$6,500,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- Private Property Owners and Development Interests

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Private Property Owners and Development Interests
- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Cedar Park Public Works Department

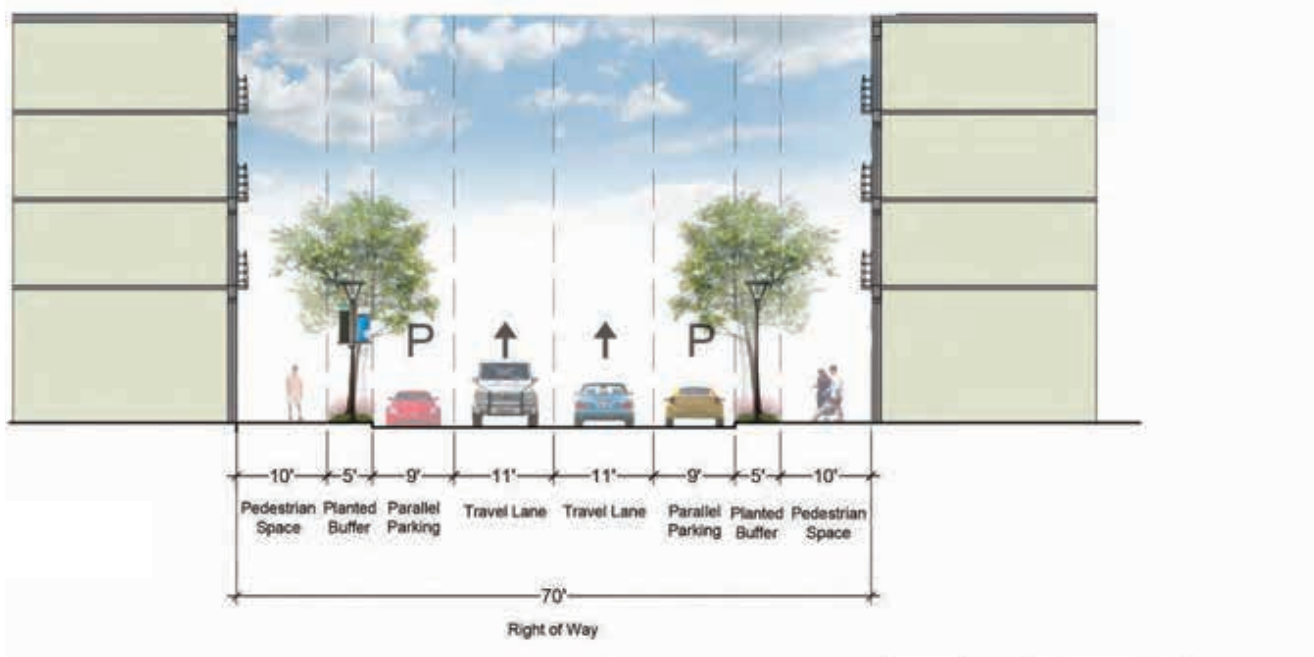


Figure 54: Internal Street (North) Illustrative



Figure 55: Walkable Blocks Diagram



8

NOISE BARRIER

Residents who live in the Park Place Neighborhood located east of the railway expressed sensitivity to the potential noise created by realigning Bell Boulevard next to the rail tracks. Bell Boulevard would primarily fit in the right of way of existing Old Highway 183. Old Highway 183 currently has about 30 feet of vegetation, about 40 feet of railroad right of way, followed by another 30 feet of vegetation separating it from the adjacent neighborhood. In addition to maintaining the existing buffers, the need for a sound barrier should be considered in order to provide noise mitigation from both the rail and the roadway. A noise barrier could be constructed from various materials and would be integrated into the landscape between the back fence line of residential lots and the railway buffer.

ACTION STEPS

- Secure funding
- Acquire necessary portions of right of way
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Soundwall—approximately \$2,000,000

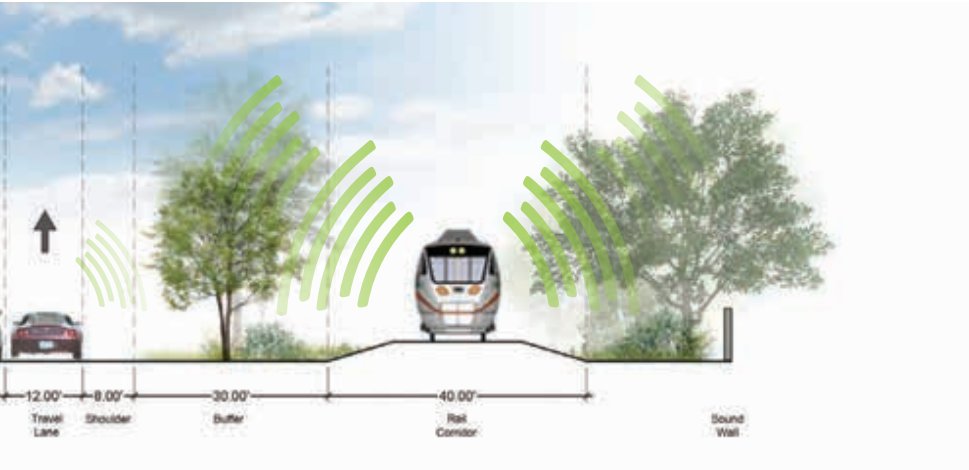
WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest
- State Infrastructure Bank (SIB)

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Cedar Park Public Works Department
- Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)
- Neighborhood Association

Figure 56: Soundwall



SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

- Reduced noise
- Textured materials
- Landscaping featuring native trees and plants



The new soundwall should be an aesthetically pleasing design that serves numerous functions.



9

REGIONAL STORMWATER DETENTION

Currently Cedar Park requires that the owner of a piece of property be responsible for the conveyance of all stormwater flowing through the property. This requirement limits the amount of development that can be built on a parcel of land and makes it difficult to develop mixed-use buildings which typically have a larger building footprint. In addition, a portion of the study area is located in the 100-year floodplain. The regional detention plan would remove roughly 10 acres from the floodplain and provide regional detention along the public streets and the Buttercup Creek Natural Area in order to allow for larger development footprints on other parts of the district.

ACTION STEPS

- Secure Funding
- Acquire necessary easements
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (18 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (9 months)
- Plan and establish funding stream for ongoing operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Wet Pond and Ditch Improvements—approximately \$750,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Cedar Park Public Works Department
- Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

10

PROJECTS



SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Signage and wayfinding is an essential tool that cities must use to showcase the community's assets to tourists, current and future residents, property owners, business owners and employers. Strong signage and wayfinding can dramatically affect the impression people have of the quality of a community, ultimately affecting their desire to come back for a second visit or to stay. Good signage starts with welcoming people into town and pointing them in the right direction with attractive and informative signage that embodies the historic character of the community. Cedar Park has a handful of gateway and directional signs along key corridors. This signage program should be expanded to include Destination Bell Boulevard. Bell Boulevard should have signature gateway signage, works of art or landscaping to identify the primary entrances into the development. In addition, directional signs should be located at key decision points for vehicles and pedestrians to find parking locations and key destinations throughout the development.

ACTION STEPS

- Secure funding
- Coordinate design/engineering efforts (4 months)
- Complete construction of infrastructure improvements (6 months)
- Plan for operations and maintenance

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Signage and Wayfinding—approximately \$500,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

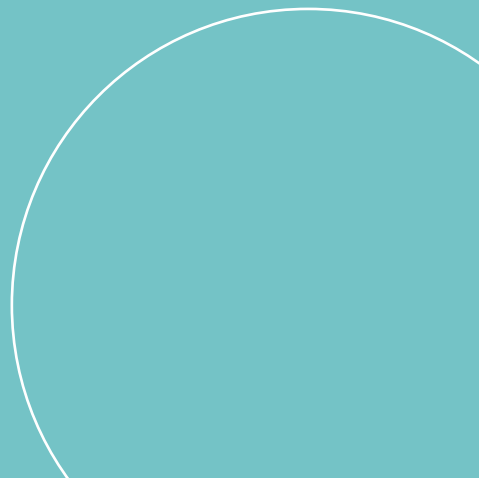
- General Obligation Bonds
- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (p.96)
- Public Improvement District (p.97)
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Engineering Department
- Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)

POLICIES

POLICIES DEFINE
REQUIREMENTS TO CONTROL
AND INFLUENCE FUTURE
CHANGES.





1

MIXED-USE ZONING

The majority of the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Study Area is zoned “Commercial” or “Local Retail.” These zoning districts exclusively allow retail business and offices. To protect public health and residential property values, many communities adopted zoning ordinances that focused on separating different uses and buffering them from each other to minimize nuisances. However, there are often advantages to locating different uses in close proximity. Mixed use zoning encourages a greater diversity of amenities and standards that allow for compact and connected uses, higher density development, and parking areas tucked away to support vibrant social spaces. Mixed use zoning fosters redevelopment that fits the vision of the vibrant, walkable community proposed in the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan.

Currently Cedar Park has a zoning category called “Mixed-use District.” Property owners can request a change to this category. The City is currently in the early stages of updating the zoning ordinance and revising this zoning district. The City should consider refining the “Mixed-use District” category to encourage vertical as well as horizontal mixed use and control the character and density of the development with design standards that encourage walkability. In addition, the city could consider establishing an “overlay” district for the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Area. An “overlay” district is a zoning district that is superimposed over one or more existing districts in order to impose additional restrictions, permit additional uses, or implement density bonuses or incentive zoning to achieve community goals. In the case of mixed use zoning, it can be used to allow added uses and to provide incentives to achieve the master plan goals. Thus developers can develop either according to the underlying zoning or according to more flexible mixed use provisions.

Throughout the rezoning process, the City should actively contact property owners and stakeholders to demonstrate the connection between the master plan and the proposed zoning regulations aimed at implementing the plan. Until the adoption of the ordinance update, the City should encourage property owners who want to redevelop to use the Planned Development process.

ACTION STEPS

- Move forward with the zoning ordinance update to encourage vertical as well as horizontal mixed use and control the character and density of the development
- Update mixed-use zoning district and/or create a mixed-use overlay district for Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Study Area
- Encourage property owners to redevelop under the Planned Development process until the adoption of the ordinance update
- Actively educate property owners and stakeholders about the rezoning process to demonstrate the connection between the master plan and the proposed zoning regulations

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Zoning Code Revision—approximately \$150,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Development Services Department



2

SHARED PARKING

The commercial development along Bell Boulevard is primarily made up of one-story buildings that have large surface parking lots. The parking often takes up more area than the building. Cedar Park requires that all parking for a proposed development must be provided on-site. If there is overflow parking, it can be shared with other developments. The master plan proposes a vibrant walkable center that balances auto-oriented mobility with pedestrian accessibility. A district parking strategy will maximize efficiency and free up private land for more valuable land uses. In addition to shared surface parking, structured parking is an essential ingredient in achieving the master plan vision. While parking garages are significantly more expensive to build than surface parking, their efficiency and long-term value often justify the cost. Structured parking garages often provide convenient parking for a variety of uses within a development. As traditional surface parking transform into higher density building types and parking structures, community partners must ensure parking opportunities do not drop or suffer. Parking scenarios must accommodate both local stakeholder and visitor needs, while promoting the goals of the master plan. In practice, the City makes all decisions regarding parking supply and management, including the potential for shared parking with developers, on a case by case basis. Where possible, shared parking arrangements should be implemented with developers, property owners and tenants to maximize parking efficiencies within the district. Facilitating the shared use of a limited supply of parking resources between retail, restaurant and entertainment land uses with varying peak demand, benefits all parties. It reduces the total number of spaces, cost, and amount of land required for parking. It also increases the space available for potential revenue in the development.

ACTION STEPS

- Develop a district parking strategy
- Amend current code to allow more flexibility and encourage more shared parking for mixed-use districts

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- District Parking Strategy—approximately \$2,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Development Services Department
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest



3

DESIGN STANDARDS

The existing character of Bell Boulevard is auto-oriented strip development that does not highlight Cedar Park's identity as a family-friendly community. One of the goals of the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan is to solidify the identity of Cedar Park. Throughout the process, stakeholders weighed in on the style of architecture, parks, retail storefronts, streetscapes, lighting and public art. Refer to pages 30-31 to view some of the results from the identity exercises. To achieve the desired vision, Cedar Park will need to provide clear guidance on the architectural specifications for the streetscapes, site design and building façades. These standards should include specifications for both private and public infrastructure in order to achieve the desired character.

Private development standards may include site design specifications such as block lengths, building mass, density, building setbacks, architectural design and off-street parking. Public right of way standards may include on-street parking, pedestrian area widths, low-impact development, materials, lighting, and planting pallets.

Elements such as clear glass windows on the ground floor, lighting, signage, canopy structures, sidewalk buffering and surface finishes should be considered for both public and private development. Design standards ensure that the development looks cohesive and retains a sense of identity for many decades, even after particular land uses or tenants change over time. The recommendations on pages 88-91 summarize the initial design considerations the project team used to develop the supported vision for Destination Bell Boulevard.

ACTION STEPS

- Update site development standards with design standards for the mixed-use district
- Update subdivision standards with design standards for the mixed-use district

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Design Standards—approximately \$150,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest
- Public Improvement District

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Development Services Department
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

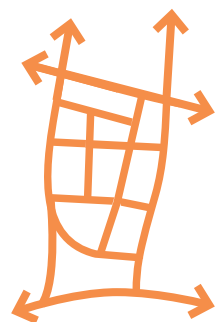
policy highlight: design standards

COMMUNITY PATTERN



WALKABLE BLOCKS

An interconnected network of streets composed of small blocks is a vital component of walkable communities. Cedar Park's existing subdivision code requires block lengths between 500-1200 feet. Comparable mixed-use communities typically have block sizes between 300-600 feet. Redevelopment sites larger than 2 acres should be subdivided further to create additional blocks. The block length allowed should be between 300-600 feet.



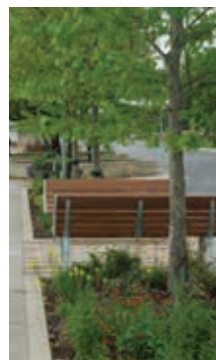
CONNECTED STREETS

Well-designed, connected streets make travel more efficient by providing choice not only in modes, but also in routes. As Bell Boulevard redevelops, new streets should connect to existing streets, even if they are off-site. Vehicular travel lanes should be 10-12 feet wide, increasing in width only as vehicular volume increases. Pedestrian access should be provided to adjacent neighborhoods. New development should maximize the number of blocks connected by local streets and minimize the number of arterials bisecting the site.



COMFORTABLE SPACES

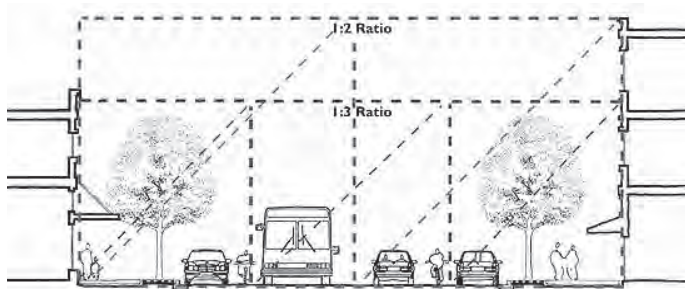
In an effort to create a comfortable and welcoming environment for all patrons, streets should be designed to accommodate both pedestrians and automobiles. Pedestrian areas should be between 10-30 feet and width should increase as pedestrian volume increases. Streets should incorporate outdoor seating, restaurant patios, ground floor retail and a strong use of shade to temper the Texas climate. Where possible, front retail/restaurants along park space to create a vibrant atmosphere for all ages.



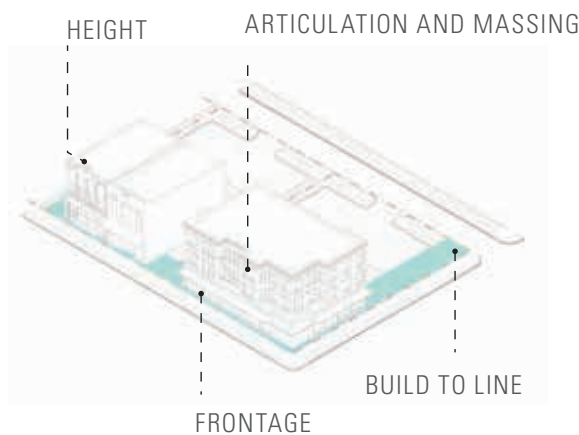
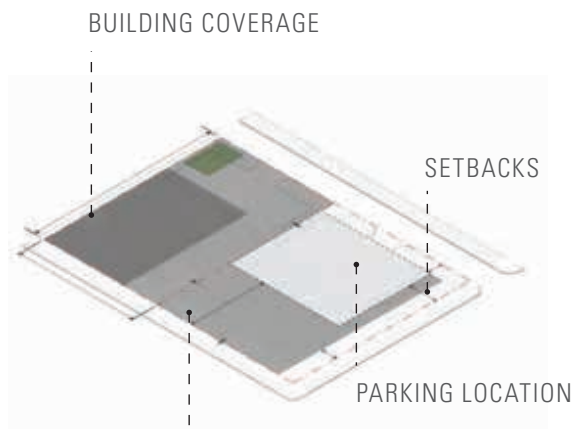
FUNCTIONAL AND BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES

Dense overhead tree canopy creates optimal pedestrian conditions and helps to create a park-like experience along the street. Planting should be comprised of Texas native and adapted species that together create a refined, colorful and sustainable plant palette and contribute to the district stormwater system. The width of the planting area should be a minimum of 5 feet in order to ensure enough soil volume for healthy street trees. Street trees should be planted at minimum 30-40 feet on center and should be located between the public sidewalk and the edge of the curb.

SITE DEVELOPMENT



Buildings create a sense of definition and enclosure. Height-to-width ratios between 1:3 and 1:2 create an enclosure.



COMPACT DESIGN

Compact design reflects the experience of traditional American main streets. This creative and efficient use of land reduces building footprints and leaves more land for other uses such as park space or additional development. In order for Bell Boulevard to support a walkable retail district that does not dramatically increase traffic demand, the development itself must provide enough housing for people to walk instead of drive. Buildings should be 3-5 stories with a ground floor height minimum of 15 feet to allow for commercial spaces on the ground floor.

FLEXIBLE LOTS

In order to accommodate a variety of land uses, lot sizes should be flexible to encourage diversity. Lot widths for typical mixed-use building should be about 200 feet in order to ensure building footprints large enough for parking structures (typically 120 feet wide and between 200 and 400 feet long). Other uses, such as specialty retail and townhouses have smaller lot widths between 20-60 feet. Mixed-use buildings typically have 85 percent to 90 percent building coverage. This coverage is offset by a regional stormwater management plan that preserves large amount of adjacent land area for open natural space.

ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

Too many driveways can cause unpleasant interactions between vehicles and pedestrians. Parking and service access should be primarily located off of side streets to maximize walkable street frontage. Vehicular access to parking garages should be placed on side streets away from heavy pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian access should be from public streets (as opposed to alleys) and should be favored toward primary pedestrian thoroughfares where possible. Mixed-use blocks should be limited to two curb cuts per block. Parking garages should be tucked into the middle of the block and wrapped by residential or retail uses on the ground floor.

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

Buildings should create well-defined public spaces. Design Standards should ensure that buildings shall be 0-10 feet from all public street frontage and that building façades face onto the street. A minimum of 75 percent of the building should face the primary façade. Parking structures should be wrapped by residential or retail uses.

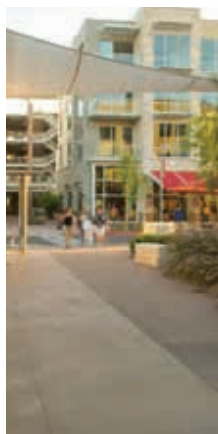
policy highlight: design standards

BUILDING FORM



MASSING

Varied roof planes and building heights break-down the overall scale and massing of large full-block developments. Buildings should stepback on the upper-stories in order to minimize their appearance from the pedestrians. There should be a consistency to the building fabric that allows for highlighting exceptional moments. A turret, spire or tower may exceed maximum height of a building to accentuate signature places. Parking garages should be wrapped with building program where possible to ensure a vibrant public realm.



FAÇADE

The façade of the buildings will be a key determinant of the atmosphere created by new development. The façade should create unique interest with varying depth, height and materials. A playful combination of storefronts and street-level façades should bring hierarchy to Bell Boulevard by drawing attention to important areas such as the shopping street while still creating wholesome experiences on the other street typologies. Encourage the use of materials or vegetation that create dynamic façades and screen raw parking structures. Parking garage façade elements, such as metal panels, create interest beyond the exposed structure of the garage. Parking garage screening elements also help to shield nearby windows from headlights in the evenings.



PUBLIC REALM

The character of the streetscape and built environment is greatly impacted by buildings and how they front the street. Arcades, display windows, entry areas, patios, awnings and other such design features should make up the majority of the ground floor façade. Retail frontages should employ a majority of clear glass to provide transparency between street and retail. This should also be tempered by overhangs or other elements that help mitigate the hot Texas climate.



PRIVATE SPACES

Private landscaped areas should have large shade trees with a minimum caliper of four inches. Paving materials should be warm toned, natural materials such as stone and brick. Surface parking lots shall be screened from all adjacent public streets and neighboring sites. Parking spaces shall not exceed 10 spaces in a row without being interrupted by a landscaped island. Loading, service and trash storage areas shall be screened from all public roadways. All roof mounted mechanical elements must be screened from view from the public right of way and neighboring properties.

DETAILS



MATERIALS

The type of materials chosen aid in achieving the character and feel Cedar Park residents desire. Natural stone, blackened metals and wood create a comfortable atmosphere that accentuates the existing natural assets surrounding the development. An eloquent mixture of rough and refined materials should be attained to highlight Cedar Park's vibrant personality and context. The City should consider creating an exception to the 100 percent masonry requirement for high quality wood and metal materials within Destination Bell Boulevard.



FURNISHINGS

Furnishings should be used throughout the many areas of Bell Boulevard. The various furnishings should be cohesive, be comprised of materials and finishes that accent the area, and provide comfortable rest for all users. A combination of fixed and moveable pieces is important to create a kinetic atmosphere that promotes social interaction while maintaining aesthetic consistency.



ART

Art is capable of evoking emotion, creating one-of-a-kind places and bringing together communities. For this reason, it is imperative that the art located throughout Bell Boulevard be of high quality, speak to the public's vision and desires and create memorable experiences. There should be a variety of art incorporated in exciting and thoughtful ways throughout the corridor.

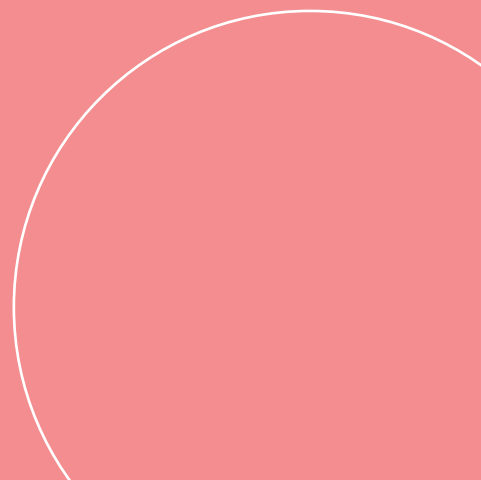
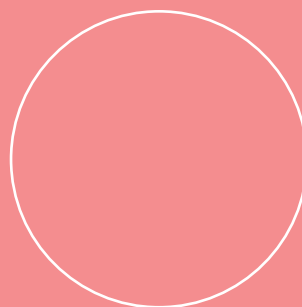
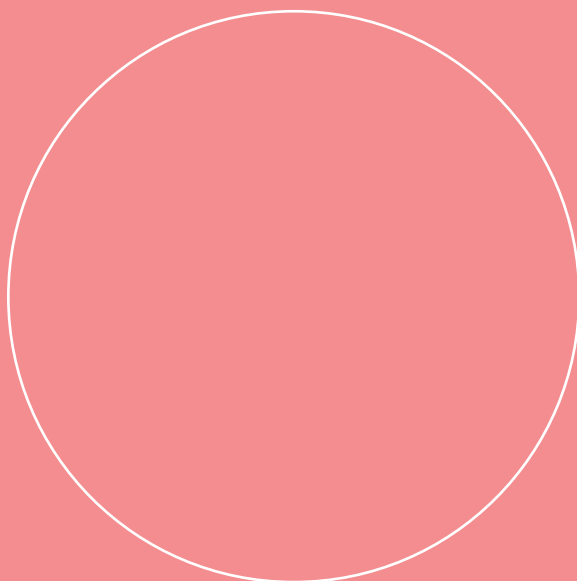
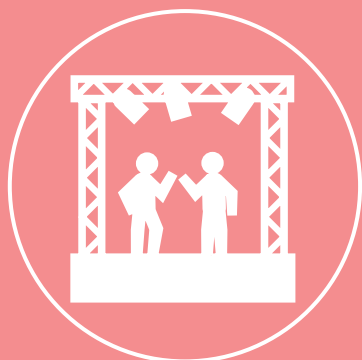


LIGHTING

Lighting serves many utilitarian roles in addition to providing a unique identity for Bell Boulevard. Lighting consistency is important to create a safe, welcoming atmosphere and highlight areas of importance through careful use of accent lighting. Festive lighting proved to be popular with stakeholders.

PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS ARE ACTIONS
TAKEN TO CONTROL AND
INFLUENCE ELEMENTS OF
THE STUDY AREA BUT DO
NOT REQUIRE PERMANENT
PHYSICAL CHANGES.





1

NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT ZONE AND FEE WAIVERS

A Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) is an area eligible for incentives and specially designated by the City for meeting eligibility criteria. An officially designated NEZ can receive incentives to promote equitable housing and economic development, and to improve the public safety of residents in the empowerment zone, as well as quality of social services.

Many cities routinely charge new developments with impact fees for roads, schools, community facilities, parks, amenities and community-related infrastructure. In a NEZ, incentives like building permit and impact fee waivers can be granted to homeowners, investor-owners and developers. Fee waivers provide incentive for development and flexibility for investor-owners.

Chapter 378 is a state law allowing the City of Cedar Park to create a NEZ and implement these incentives through a single process. This ability to waive fees, or portions thereof, can encourage mixed-use development and proposed projects that further the community's vision for Bell Boulevard. Providing this waiver would make mixed-use project types more viable and attractive to community investors.

Additionally, this law provides flexibility for City administration in implementing incentives. Under this code, approval expires every 10 years, so the City can decide to let it lapse if the NEZ has fully served its community purpose, or keep it going to better achieve the vision.

ACTION STEPS

- First, the City Council "determines" that the creation of the zone would promote at least one of the following: (1) the creation of affordable housing, including manufactured housing, in the zone; (2) an increase in economic development in the zone; (3) an increase in the quality of social services, education, or public safety provided to residents in the zone; or (4) the rehabilitation of affordable housing in the zone. The determination mentioned by the statute could take the form of a council vote or resolution.
- The second step is for the City Council to pass a resolution containing the following elements: (1) a copy of the determination described above; (2) a description of the boundaries of the zone (which can be any portion of the City's territory); (3) a finding by the council that the creation of the zone benefits and is for the public purpose of increasing the public health, safety, and welfare of the persons in the municipality; and (4) a finding by the governing body that the zone meets the requirements of a reinvestment zone under Section 312.202 of the Tax Code.

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- City Council approval of NEZ—staff time
- Creation of resolution—staff time

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Economic Development Department
- Cedar Park Development Services Department



2

CHAPTER 380 INCENTIVE AGREEMENTS

Chapter 380 of the Local Government Code authorizes municipalities to offer incentives designed to promote economic development such as commercial and retail projects. Specifically, it provides for offering loans and grants of city funds or services at little or no cost to promote state and local economic development and to stimulate business and commercial activity. These agreements can be used to share back sales or assessed value tax. The tax return may be capped both annually and for a defined period of time. Some cities, through the creation of development authorities, also have architectural review of projects applying for the incentive. Cedar Park has successfully implemented 380 Agreements for the 1890 Ranch project and the Costco at Cedar Park Town Center.

ACTION STEPS

- Recruit property owners or developers interested in redevelopment
- Conduct an economic impact analysis
- Draft agreement
- Oversee agreement

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Economic Impact Analysis—approximately \$5,000
- Agreement Draft and Oversight—staff time

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Economic Development Department



3

STRUCTURED PARKING INCENTIVES

The commercial development along Bell Boulevard is primarily made up of one story buildings that have large surface parking lots. The parking often takes up more area than the building. Structured parking refers to an above-grade, ramp-accessible structure specifically designed to accommodate vehicle parking. It uses less area and saves valuable land for other uses. While parking garages are significantly more expensive to build than surface parking, the long-term value of integrated mixed-use development and efficient land use can help justify the cost. Structured parking is an essential ingredient in achieving the master plan vision. Chapter 380 of the Local Government Code authorizes municipalities to offer incentives designed to promote economic development such as commercial and retail projects. The City could use a 380 Agreement to specifically assist in the cost of a parking structure in order for the development to achieve the density needed for a walkable mixed-use district. Prior to the agreement, the City should define a district parking strategy to determine the overall parking capacity and opportunities for shared and on street parking in addition to garages.

ACTION STEPS

- Recruit property owners or developers interested in redevelopment
- Define a district parking strategy
- Draft agreement
- Oversee agreement

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- District Parking Strategy—approximately \$2,000
- Economic Impact Analysis—approximately \$5,000
- Average Cost of a 120 feet x 275 feet Multi-Story Parking Structure - approximately \$6,000,000
- Agreement Draft and Oversight—staff time

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Economic Development Department



4

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

Authorized by Chapter 311 of the Texas Tax Code, tax increment financing is a tool that local governments can use to publicly finance needed improvements to infrastructure and buildings within a designated area known as a reinvestment zone. The cost of improvements to the reinvestment zone is repaid by the future tax revenues of each taxing unit that levies taxes against the property. Each taxing unit can choose to dedicate all, a portion of, or none of the tax revenue gained as a result of improvements within the reinvestment zone. These zones are commonly referred to as either a tax increment financing (TIF) zone, transportation reinvestment zone (TRZ) or a tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ). Built on a foundation of growing tax revenues, TIF is vulnerable to both national and local economic downturns. Cities have options on bearing investment risk. They may use the increment to secure bonds—especially useful for large, up-front development costs. They may also use what is called “pay-as-you-go” financing and expect the developer to secure the credit. The City participates by promising the developer a portion of the increment. Cities may also choose to fund, rather than finance, the endeavor, spending the accrued increment directly on the project. Cedar Park is familiar with the TIF process. There are two TIF districts in Cedar Park, the residential component of the Cedar Park Town Center and 17 acres adjacent to the Cedar Park Center.

ACTION STEPS

- Recruit property owners or developers interested in redevelopment
- Conduct an economic impact analysis
- Draft legal agreement
- Oversee legal agreement

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Economic Impact Analysis—approximately \$5,000
- Agreement Draft and Oversight—approximately \$90,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Economic Development Department



5

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (PID)

Chapter 372 of the Local Government Code gives municipalities the authority to establish a Public Improvement District (PID). A PID is a special assessment area created to fund services and improvements beyond those normally provided by the City. These funds are subsequently managed and distributed by the local government to the designated agency in charge of the PID. PIDs are generally governed by a public commission, nonprofit board or a public-private partnership. The assessment allows each PID to have its own work program, which may consist of eligible activities such as marketing the area, providing additional security, landscaping and lighting, street cleaning, and cultural or recreational improvements. A PID is most beneficial when the property owners have the financial ability to pay the special assessments that will go toward the public services. This tool is useful to fund operations and maintenance costs once many of the initial capital improvements are in place. Upkeep throughout the district may require a substantial investment for cleaning, garbage and graffiti removal, or maintenance of landscaping. With ever-increasing municipal budget constraints, PIDs are an opportunity to allow communities to increase revenue, with the proceeds returning to the district in which the revenues are generated.

ACTION STEPS

- Recruit property owners or developers interested in establishing a PID
- Conduct an economic impact analysis
- Draft legal agreement
- Oversee legal agreement

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Economic Impact Analysis—approximately \$5,000
- Agreement Draft and Oversight—staff time

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Economic Development Department
- Cedar Park Development Services Department

PROGRAMS



6

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Cedar Park is known for its strong, dynamic business community with retail sales revenue on the rise. As an older commercial district divided by a highway, Bell Boulevard has not seen the same amount of commercial growth as the rest of the City. Sales tax revenue in the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Area has decreased -13.77 percent since 2009, but citywide it has increased 26.08 percent. If the City were to invest in revitalizing the district, Bell Boulevard could become a vibrant, centrally located commercial district. This would be an ideal location to celebrate local businesses, incubate new ventures and showcase regional attractions. To help grow and ensure the success of these businesses, Cedar Park, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, could establish a downtown business association. Downtown business associations are nonprofit entities that promote, revitalize and increase business activity in downtown areas. They can provide cultural programming such as events, markets and celebrations that enhance the history, culture, atmosphere and pride in downtown commerce. Membership assistance may include trainings or communication that connects retail and commercial tenants and promotes the safety of downtown customers. Business associations encourage dialogue between business owners, local officials and City staff to ensure quality programming, development and enhancements to the downtown.

ACTION STEPS

- Identify businesses interested in a downtown business association
- Establish a nonprofit entity
- Oversee management of nonprofit

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Establish a 501(c)(3) nonprofit—approximately \$2,500

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Downtown Business Association Membership

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Chamber of Commerce
- Cedar Park Economic Development Department
- Cedar Park Tourism Department



7

DESTINATION BELL BOULEVARD COORDINATOR

One of the successful national programs for downtown revitalization is the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street program. The program is specifically for commercial areas with a concentration of historic buildings but Bell Boulevard could adapt the Main Street Approach. This approach focuses on four targeted areas: organization, promotions, design and economic restructuring. Organization includes strengthening partnerships in the community, recruiting volunteers, fundraising and organizing participating businesses and other stakeholders into a downtown business association. Promotion focuses on creating and selling a positive image of the area that fosters community pride and investment. Design focuses on promoting an appealing, safe physical environment while enhancing the appearance through building rehabilitation and appropriate new construction. Economic restructuring sustains the business district's existing economy while identifying new market opportunities or uses for vacant buildings. The Main Street Approach relies on a designated staff person who serves as a professional coordinator of the program. This person is usually someone with strong organizational and communications skills and experience in at least two of the four work areas of the Main Street Approach. Some of the responsibilities of a Destination Bell Boulevard Coordinator could include:

- Overseeing grant applications: There are many federal and state grants available for downtown revitalization. A Destination Bell Boulevard Coordinator could spearhead these grant applications.
- Building downtown partnerships: Continual dialogue amongst community partners about how to achieve the vision will foster the entrepreneurship and collaboration needed to ensure success.
- Providing guidance on and incentive for a balanced commercial/retail mix: Well-planned development yields a complex mix of commercial, retail, residential, office, entertainment and civic. The Destination Bell Boulevard Coordinator would proactively monitor and advise on key zoning, parking, land use and policy decisions in order to ensure a balanced mix.
- Coordinating events: A range of civic events hosted by Cedar Park would be ideal opportunities to promote and expand the Main Street Approach efforts. The Destination Bell Boulevard Coordinator would be heavily involved in the entertainment and event coordination discussed on page 102.

ACTION STEPS

- Appoint or hire an additional staff person to serve as the Destination Bell Boulevard Coordinator

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- ½ Average Salary for Coordinator (or part time position)—approximately \$25,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- City of Cedar Park



8

BRANDING AND MARKETING STRATEGY

Branding Bell Boulevard as a premier mixed-use district is a key strategy in attracting desired investment and development to Cedar Park. Marketing techniques can take many forms, such as temporary banners, construction signage, brochures or pamphlets targeted to a specific audience, advertising in publications, direct mail to specific audiences, telephone calls, site tours of target development areas and seminars for prospective partners. The first step is to develop a marketing plan for the district. The marketing of properties, events, and other elements pertaining to Bell Boulevard is currently carried out by various parties. These entities should coordinate marketing efforts for the corridor and mixed-use district. These entities should hold joint events when possible, market destinations and key retailers collectively, and work to craft marketing messages geared to critical demographic groups in the local region. Pursuing a coordinated marketing plan allows entities to increase the visibility of Bell Boulevard in the region to a greater extent than having separate entities pursue separate strategies. Targeted campaigns are recommended that would be aimed at specific user groups such as developers, prospective employers, residents, employees and visitors.

ACTION STEPS

- Hire a consultant to develop a Branding and Marketing Plan
- Coordinate the implementation of the Branding and Marketing Plan

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Branding and Marketing Plan—approximately \$50,000*
- Marketing Collateral—approximately \$50,000 - \$150,000*

** Costs could be reduced if City staff resources are used*

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Tourism Fund
- Private Property Owners and Development Interest

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Private Property Owners and Development Interests
- Cedar Park Economic Development Department
- Cedar Park Tourism Department
- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Business Association
- Public Improvement District
- Cedar Park Media and Communications Department

PROGRAMS



9

ENTERTAINMENT AND EVENT COORDINATION

Cedar Park hosts a variety of events including a summer concert series, movies in the park, a holiday tree lighting festival and many other popular gatherings throughout the year. The master plan recommends that the City invest in upgrades to streetscapes and park spaces so that these spaces can accommodate events and festivals. One of Cedar Park's most celebrated events, the Heritage Festival, could be the perfect event for the Bell Boulevard district because of the significant historical sites in the area. These events attract regional visitors, increase retail sales and foster community pride. Cedar Park and its partners should ensure that the Bell Boulevard district actively pursues and coordinates events. It is also important to ensure that the events are for people of all ages, all times of the year, and all times of day. Different types of events that happen throughout the year will ensure that Bell Boulevard is a destination for everyone. Even prior to construction, Cedar Park should consider temporarily closing Old Highway 183 to host community events. The temporary events and festivals could energize the space and help people imagine the possibility of new development.

ACTION STEPS

- Host temporary events prior to construction
- Coordinate an event schedule for the parks and public spaces
- Oversee events

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST

- Annual Event Budget—approximately \$50,000*
- * Costs could be reduced if City staff resources are used*

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Tourism Fund
- General Fund

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT

- Cedar Park Tourism Department
- Cedar Park Parks, Arts and Community Enrichment (PACE) Board



INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM FOR OLD BELL HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Cedar Park currently has a virtual “walk-n-learn” tour that highlights all of the historical markers throughout the City. As the area around the historic Buttercup Creek Natural Area redevelops, this program could be expanded to include historical and environmental education along the new trails and public spaces. In addition to highlighting the historic sites and natural flora and fauna, this interpretive program could include information about innovative design features such as regional limestone incorporated into the architecture, or innovative stormwater management that reduces water consumption.

ACTION STEPS

- Determine sites for interpretive markers
- Research and develop the educational programming and content
- Oversee interpretive sign installation
- Conduct additional programming

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

- Interpretive Signs—approximately \$25,000

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES?

- Tourism Fund
- General Fund
- Grants

WHO CAN HELP LEAD THE EFFORT?

- Cedar Park Tourism Department
- Cedar Park Parks, Arts and Community Enrichment (PACE) Board

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE/SUMMARY

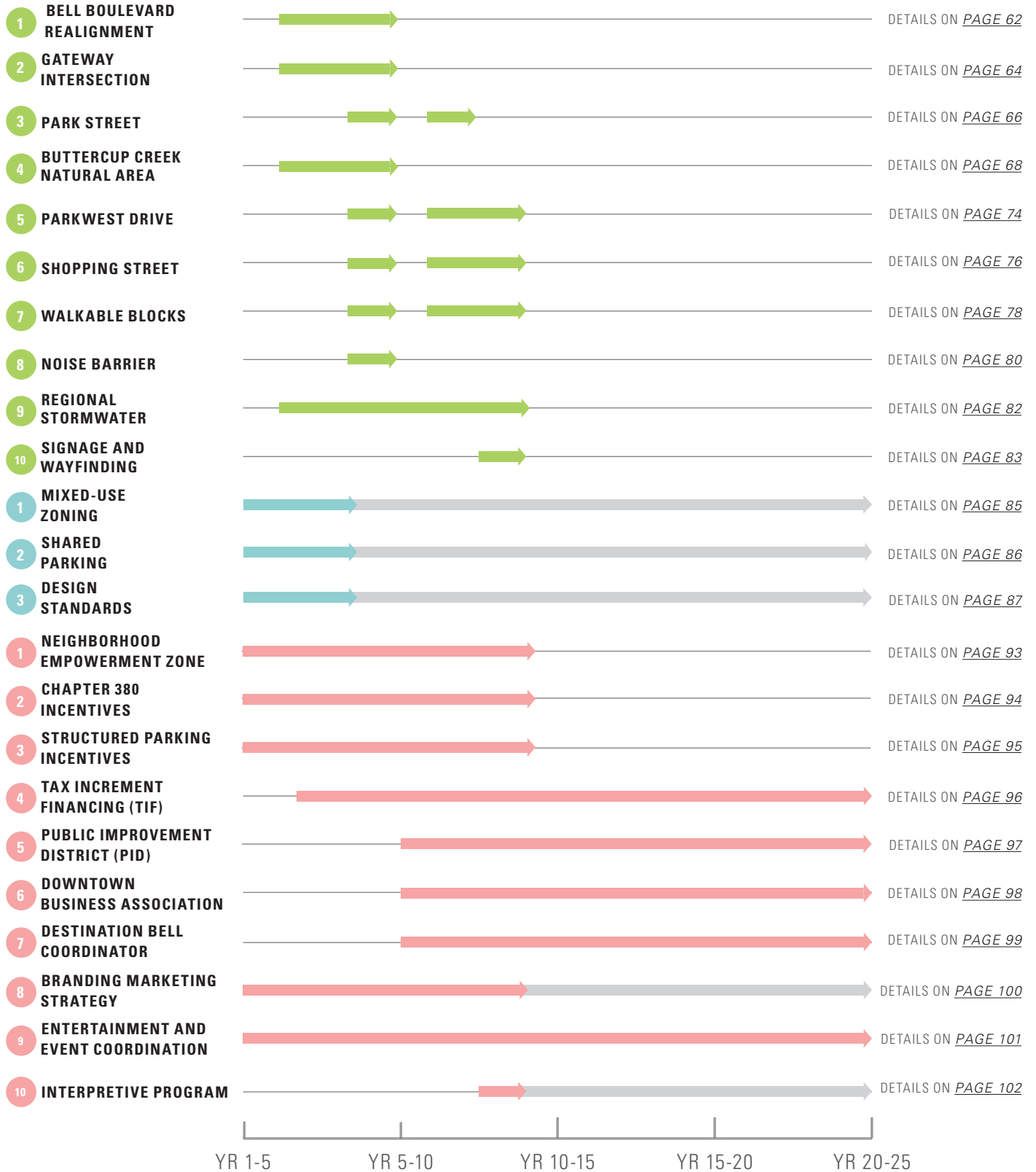


Figure 57: Implementation Timeline/Summary

FUNDING SOURCES

This master plan recommends a variety of funding sources to support the proposed projects, policies and programs.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

Cities use bonds to finance major capital projects over long periods of time. While there are several types of bonds that differ from each other in a variety of ways, the general premise is that a city pays for large public investments by taking on debt, which it repays through a corresponding property tax that elapses when the debt is covered.

General obligation bonds, by which a city pledges to repay bond debt through ad valorem tax revenues, are generally viewed as the most secure method for municipal bonding. Additionally, unlike other methods of municipal bonding and public financing, this method requires voter approval. Cedar Park is currently considering issuing general obligation bonds for several public projects.

GENERAL FUND

Primarily supported by tax revenue (from both residential and commercial property tax, and the \$.01 sales tax from shopping and dining within Cedar Park), this is the primary operating fund for the City of Cedar Park.

SPECIAL REVENUE FUND(S)

The state legislature authorized the creation of Community Development and Economic Development Corporations that utilize a portion of the City's sales tax revenues to develop industry and benefit the community.

TOURISM FUND

Cedar Park raises revenue by taxing hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts located in the City. That revenue is then used to directly promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

This program provides innovative financing methods to assist communities in making mobility improvements. Projects that are eligible for funding under existing federal highway rules can access capital funds at or lower-than-market interest rates.

GRANTS

The public and non-profit sectors offer a range of grants that could help implement the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Master Plan. In particular, the National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town grant (creative placemaking/public art), the Urban Land Institute's Urban Innovation grant program (partnerships in building healthy communities), and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's nonpoint source grants (stormwater management improvements) could be useful in implementing the projects recommended in the master plan.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

As the City moves forward, it is important to keep in mind the following overarching planning recommendations:

CONSIDER DESTINATION BELL BOULEVARD DURING THE ANNUAL BUDGET AND CIP PROCESS

Ensure that the creation of Cedar Park's operating budget and Capital Improvement Plan includes priorities established by the Bell Boulevard Master Plan. Aligning the operating budget and CIP plan keeps members of the public informed of major construction happening along Bell Boulevard. These projects should include primarily large-scale construction projects including road improvement and enhancements, expanded water and wastewater utility projects, improvements within city parks, and city facility buildings.

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON A BALANCED COMMERCIAL/RETAIL MIX

Well-planned and incentivized development yields a complex mix of commercial, retail, residential, office, entertainment and civic. Cities that want to promote balanced uses must proactively resolve key zoning, parking, land use and policy decisions in order to anticipate influxes of new development proposals. Developing diagrams, charts, and computer renderings helps to illustrate the intent of these planning and policy decisions. Visual guidance tools assist developers in understanding how developments may mix uses vertically, meaning from one floor to another in a building, as well as mix horizontally, meaning side-by-side in the same building. Mixed-use developers anticipate a greater level of discretionary scrutiny than they would if they built within a traditional zoning district (e.g., commercial or single-family). Developers avoid what they see as the risk in trying new types of projects, because it makes it challenging for them to verify that their development rights have "vested," which is an important legal and financial concept. Incentivize commercial/retail mix by making sure that the policies, programs or design standards that City officials and community stakeholders would like to see enforced are in place and address absences or loopholes in the design review process.

CONDUCT FINANCIAL FORECASTING

A key characteristic of local real estate markets is that they are not static, and have a substantial potential for change. Areas that are seen as marginally desirable can become more attractive to residents and businesses as a result of a range of actions, including public improvements; increased availability of sites for development; the provision of new types of development products not available elsewhere, and spillover effects when available real estate in desirable nearby areas becomes limited. These factors can in turn support higher rents and sale prices that make projects more feasible and attractive to developers. Future market analyses to project revenues from improvements over a long-term period, using assumptions about economic conditions, future conditions and other variables help to align financial capacity with long-term service objectives along Bell Boulevard. Determining the impacts of long-term growth along the corridor will have impacts on the City's fiscal sustainability and return on investment.

BE PROACTIVE IN ANTICIPATING GROWTH IN TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE

Transit-ready development considers the needs and impacts of future transit investment. This type of planning will enable Cedar Park to meet its immediate goals, while remaining adaptable to and suitable for the vibrant, environmentally sustainable possibilities of future transit-oriented development. By establishing an active, walkable mixed-use community along an existing transportation corridor, the Destination Bell Boulevard will be ready for a future transit connection.

USE THE BELL BOULEVARD REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN AS A ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPING URBAN NODES ELSEWHERE IN CEDAR PARK

At its core, this master plan emanates from Cedar Park's 2014 Comprehensive Plan, which seeks to achieve concentrated nodes of development in strategic locations throughout the City. While the programs, projects, and policies recommended in this master plan have been tailored to Bell Boulevard's particular physical, economic and cultural context, this process can be adapted and reapplied to promote similarly walkable and vibrant hubs of entertainment and community interaction elsewhere within the City.



Bell Boulevard will serve the economic and cultural needs of today's visitors and residents, while catalyzing redevelopment efforts throughout Cedar Park.

APPENDIX

ADDENDUM

At the April 7, Alternatives Workshop, three alternative plans were presented to the public. The public shared their feedback by indicating where they thought each alternative fit on a spectrum from “love it” to “needs work.” The project team assigned -4 points for “needs work” and +4 points for “love it” and gave each participant’s answer a score from -4 to +4 depending on where they fell on the spectrum. The participant scores were added together to determine each alternative’s popularity score. The Picket alternative resulted in a score of +130, the Board on Board -76 and the Split Rail -116. Based on this information, the project team determined that the Picket alternative was the top choice, with Board on Board as the second choice. At the Alternatives Workshop, a handful of participants also vocalized the need for the project team to analyze the impacts of major mobility improvements only.

At the Project Working Group meeting May 22, members concluded additional analysis was needed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the top two alternatives before moving forward with a preferred alternative. Specifically, the Working Group requested additional analysis related to costs, revenues, mobility, phasing and impact to business and property owners for the top two alternatives. In addition, the group members requested the project team determine the strengths and weaknesses of mobility-only improvements and the impact of allowing market-forces alone to address the future of the study area.

The project team concluded the following:

COSTS

Estimates for the capital costs for the Picket alternative are between \$49 and \$51 million. The Board on Board alternative ranges between \$45 and \$46 million. There would also be an additional \$2 million in right of way cost for both options. The difference in costs between the two alternatives is not dramatic due to the significant reconstruction necessary of the existing right of way. The phasing of each alternative impacts the overall costs because the project team estimated a 3% escalation. The most expensive project is realigning Bell Boulevard, if this is done early in the process it results in a 3 to 4 percent decrease in costs.

REVENUES

The range of revenues is based upon varying assumptions regarding future property values and sales tax revenues. At the low end of the revenue projection, type “B” assumes conservative future sales tax revenues and property values for apartments, office space and retail space, which are based upon newer developments representative of what is found in Cedar Park today. The high end of the range, type “A” assumes values that are more consistent with mixed-use, urban developments, though lower than those values found at such developments at The Domain, which is larger in scale and more visible than the proposed Cedar Park development, and is a

more established regional destination. *Figure 58: Revenue assumptions of property values* illustrates the range in values that were used to project potential revenue for both alternatives.

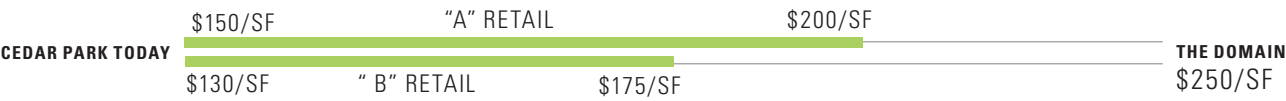
Depending on phasing, the revenues for the Picket alternative are \$86 - \$137 with a 19-21 year payback period (west to east phasing) and \$115 - \$180 million with a 14-17 year payback period (east to west phasing). If the phasing for the Picket alternative starts on the east with the realignment of Bell Boulevard, this opens up more blocks for redevelopment early on in the project which leads to the most total revenue and a faster payback period. *Figure 59: Phasing Diagrams for the Picket alternative* illustrates the phase one investment options for the Picket alternative.

The Board on Board alternative generates between \$69 - \$114 million with a 19-21 year payback period (west to east phasing) and \$70 - \$115 million with a 19-21 year payback period (center phasing). *Figure 60: Phasing Diagrams for the Board on Board alternative* illustrates the phase one investment options for the Board on Board alternative. The reason the Board on Board alternative does not generate as much revenue as the Picket alternative is because Bell Boulevard divides the study area and roughly 14 acres are not likely to develop as the type "A" walkable mixed use product that generates a higher return on investment. If the study area continued to generate revenue at its current rate for the next 30 years, it would generate approximately \$15 million assuming no additional decline in sales and property values. Both options would generate considerably more revenue than market forces, but the Picket alternative projects more value in a shorter period of time.

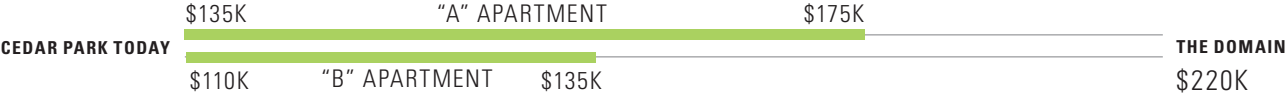
OFFICE VALUE



RETAIL VALUE



APARTMENT VALUE



RETAIL SALES



TOWNHOME SALES



\$0.02 CEDAR PARK SALES TAX
\$0.0049 CEDAR PARK TAX RATE

Figure 58: Revenue assumptions of property values

PICKET (WEST)



CAPITAL COSTS \$51 MILLION
R.O.W. COST \$2 MILLION
CASH FLOW \$86 - \$137 MILLION
PAYBACK PERIOD 19 - 21 YEARS

PICKET (EAST)



CAPITAL COSTS \$49 MILLION
R.O.W. COST \$2 MILLION
CASH FLOW \$115 - \$180 MILLION
PAYBACK PERIOD 14 - 17 YEARS



Figure 59: Phasing Diagrams for the Picket alternative

BOARD ON BOARD (WEST)



CAPITAL COSTS \$45 MILLION
R.O.W. COST \$2 MILLION
CASH FLOW \$70 - \$114 MILLION
PAYBACK PERIOD 19 - 21 YEARS

BOARD ON BOARD (CENTER)



CAPITAL COSTS \$46 MILLION
R.O.W. COST \$2 MILLION
CASH FLOW \$70 - \$115 MILLION
PAYBACK PERIOD 19 - 21 YEARS



Figure 60: Phasing Diagrams for the Board on Board alternative

MOBILITY

By 2035, if nothing is done to Bell, traffic conditions will continue to decline at the Park Street and Bell/Buttercup intersections. Both alternatives include adding additional travel and turn lanes that contribute to a 19-second decrease in average projected stop time for vehicles waiting at these intersections. During construction, the Board on Board alternative is more likely to disrupt traffic, because Bell Boulevard will need to remain open during construction. In the Picket alternative, Bell Boulevard can remain open and undisturbed while the new Bell Boulevard is constructed on Old Highway 183.

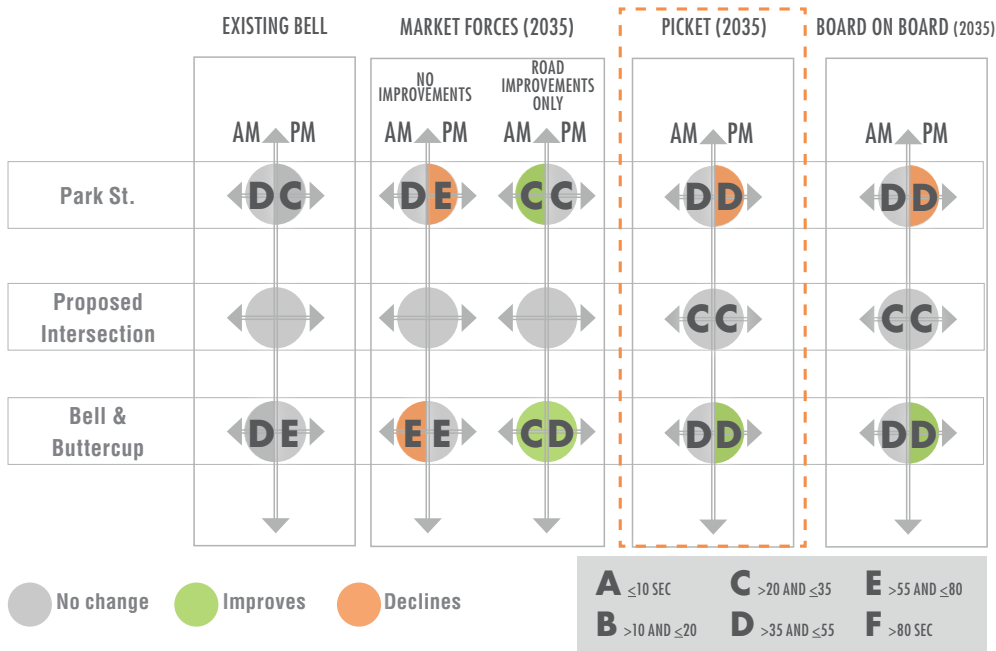
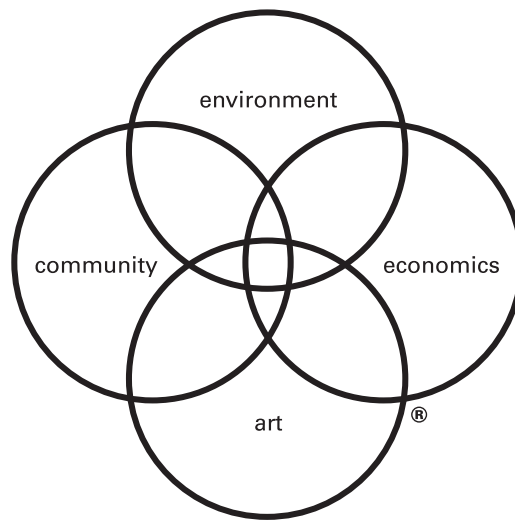


Figure 61: Level of Service of alternatives

PERCEPTION OF RISK

In both alternatives, access would be maintained for every property during and after construction. The Picket alternative would relocate the major traffic volume off of existing Bell Boulevard. Despite the inconvenience this may cause some property and business owners, the shifting of traffic from one place to another, in and of itself, does not result in damages to property and business owners as long as access is maintained. The phasing of the options is also important to business owners and property owners. Starting with the reconstruction of Bell Boulevard provides the least amount of risk to property owners and businesses because it shows commitment from the City and reduces unpredictability about how traffic will flow in the future.

On June 27, the team presented the additional analysis at a City Council Work Session and the City Council expressed confidence in the Picket alternative starting phasing on the east with the realignment of Bell Boulevard. The project team returned to the Work Group on July 2 and the Work Group recommended moving forward with the Picket alternative starting phasing on the east. On July 15, the team presented the Picket alternative and the proposed phasing to the public and received a positive reception.



DW LEGACY DESIGN®

We believe that when environment, economics, art and community are combined in harmony with the dictates of the land and needs of society, magical places result — sustainable places of timeless beauty, significant value and enduring quality, places that lift the spirit.

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